THE Ladies Calling.

IN TWO PARTS.

By the AUTHOR of the *Whole Duty of Man*: The *Causes* of the *Decay* of *Christian Piety*, and The *Gentleman's Calling*.

Favor is deceitful, and Beauty is vain: but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Prov. 31. 30.

Richard Allestree, supposed Author.

OXFORD,
Printed at the *THEATRE*.

M. DC. LXXIII.

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THE
EDITOR to the READER.

IT is a popular reproach usually cast upon Writers in morality, and Persuaders to Devotion, that while they with pompous words represent Virtue as a sufficient reward to her self, and exhort to the contempt of Glory; they prefix their names to their labors, and make the Title-page a confutation of the Book that follows it,

Our Author has effectually averted this objection, having been so far from seeking a name from others, as not to have left a possibility for the discovery of his own: but like the River *Nilus* that gives fertility and blessing wheresoe're he passes, hides his head; and permits himself to be only known in the Benefits which he dispenses.

By what Methods the other most useful works of this excellent Author have stoln themselves into the world, I am not enabled to relate; but haveing been made a party to the Publication of this present, it may be expected that I render some account thereof. For altho the curiosity of enquiring into that which is industriously concealed, be such a rudeness, and injustice also, as by no means deserves to be encouraged; yet where a benefit has been receiv'd, for those who are oblig'd, to desire to acquaint themselves with the Person unto whom they

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they ſtand indebted; that they may pay a reſpect at leaſt, if they can reach at no more equal retribution; this has ſuch a pretence to gratitude, as may juſtly demand to be conſidered. And it will be ſome ſatisfaction to the ingenuous Enquirer, that tho he have not inform'd himſelf in the particulars which he deſires, he has not been deficient in the inqueſt, and knows as much as is poſſible.

The Reader therefore may pleaſe to underſtand, that ſomewhat more than two months ſince, I receiv'd a Letter, accompanied with a Roll of Papers, opening the which, I found it was written by a hand which I was utterly a ſtranger to, and that had no Name ſubſcribed; the purport thereof was as follows.

SIR,

THe general report of your candor perſuades me you will not reject an addreſs tho from an unknown hand; which encourages me to the ſending theſe Papers to you, with a deſire you would pleaſe to peruſe them, and commit them either to the Preſs, or the Fire, as you find them worthy. I ſhall not need to tell you who I am, for if my ſuit be accepted, I have what I deſire without it: if it be not, 'tis my intereſt you ſhould not know who 'tis that has thus importun'd you. Your Charity I aſſure my ſelf will at a venture pardon,

SIR,

Your humble Servant.

'Twill

'Twill be ſuperfluous to ſay how much I was ſurpriz'd with this ſo unuſual addreſs, how much affected with the ſingular modeſty and humility which it expreſt: and after all, how much tranſported upon viewing the Treaſure, which was thus, as from the Clouds, dropt into my hands. Nor was I long to determine which of the two ways of diſpoſal propoſed unto me, was to be made uſe of: and indeed I ſhould much ſooner have perform'd my truſt, and taken care that this excellent Tract had immediately ſeen the light, had it not been needful to tranſcribe the whole, before it could ſafely be committed to the Preſs.

This I mention, not only to excuſe the delay of the Edition, but more eſpecially to beg a pardon for the miſadventures of it. It being not eaſy in a written Copie where a recourſe is not to be had unto the Author, to do him juſtice; and avoid faileures and miſtakes: which in the preſent inſtance was the more hazardous, in that every departure from the Authors inimitable pattern, would certainly be for the Worſe.

But Excuſe and Complement are any where a very inſipid fooliſh thing, and moſt intolerable in a ſerious concern: I ſhall not therefore ſay ought that looks that way; only offer a ſhort requeſt, which I ſuppoſe will be equally in the behalf of the Author of this Tract, the Editor, and the Readers of it. Which is, that whoever takes this Book in hand would ſeriouſly conſider it; and doing ſo, receive the infinite benefits of uniform

Virtue,

Virtue, and ſincere Piety; the Documents whereof, are here with all poſſible advantages propos'd: and thereby give the Author, that greateſt bleſſing, the being an inſtrument to the eternal happineſs of Souls: and as to us who deal in the affair of Printing, afford ſome ſhare in this moſt deſirable event, abſolving us from the Charge of having done miſchief, inſtead of ſervice to the world. For, to ſay the truth, no Book is ſo fatally deſtructive, as that which convinces of duty, but fails of perſuading to it. And if the beſt Books can do harm, 'twill certainly be difficult to make a plea for the multitudes of a contrary kind, which now eſpecially uſurp upon the Age.

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THE PREFACE.

THough the ſmalneſs of this Tract will ſcarce juſtifie the ſolemnity of a Preface; yet remembring 'tis deſign'd for thoſe who are accuſtomed to Ceremonious Addreſſes, I think it not beſt to approach them too abruptly. And indeed beſides the Civility, there ſeems ſome uſe of it in order to my Deſign. To adviſe, or reprove, is ſo ungrateful an Office, that he that undertakes it, had need uſe all previous arts

to

to vindicate the ſincerity of his purpoſe, and to convince the perſon admoniſhed, that 'tis neither ſpleen nor prejudice, but the moſt real exuberant kindneſs which prompts him to inflict thoſe Wounds of a Friend, *Prov.* 27. 6. *and that he is never leſs* an Enemy, than when he thus tells them the truth, *Gal.* 4. 16. *Therefore, though they may in the enſuing Leaves meet with ſome things which may have a ſhew of ſeverity, yet let me aſſure my Reader, they have indeed a deſign of the greateſt ſervice, by correcting the extravagance of ſome, to reſcue the whole Sex, as from the contagion of the example, ſo from the community of the blame. For ſuch is either the inadvertence, or malice of a great part of mankind, that (againſt all Rules of Diſcourſe) they deduce Generals from Particulars, make every Woman ſo far an* Eve, *that her depravation ſhall forfeit her whole kind; and becauſe there are fooliſh and ſcandalous Women, will ſcarce allow there are any other.*

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The truth is, the Error ſeems in many men to be affected; they propoſe to themſelves unworthy ends on Women, and make all their obſervations wholly in order to thoſe. He that is upon a baſe purſuit, takes particular notice of all that he thinks for his turn; the reſt fall not within his Sphere: and 'tis too probable he is ſo abundantly ſupplied for that abſolute conſideration, that he never deſcends to the comparative. Nay, perhaps there may yet be a deeper original of the ſcandal: the world is much governed by eſtimation; and as applauſe encourages and exalts, ſo an univerſal contempt debaſes and dejects the Spirit. If it can once paſs into a Maxim, that Women are ſuch ſilly or vicious creatures, it may put fair for the making them ſo indeed. Themſelves may imbibe the common opinion, charge all their perſonal faults on their Sex, think that they do but their kind, when indeed they moſt contradict it, and no more aſpire to any thing worthy,

than a Man can pretend to the excellencies of an Angel. And indeed this ſeems to be the practical inference of ſome Women, who could hardly have deſcended to ſuch diſhonors, had they not before been as vile in their own eyes, as they have afterward rendred themſelves in others.

It may therefore upon this account be a neceſſary Charity to the Sex, to acquaint them with their own value, animate them to ſome higher thoughts of themſelves; not to yield their ſuffrage to thoſe injurious eſtimates the World hath made of them, and from a ſuppoſed incapacity of nobler things to neglect the purſnit of them; from which God and Nature have no more precluded the Feminine, than the Maſculine part of Mankind.

In reference to ſecular Conſiderations, their advantages are moſt important; Women have a very powerful Influence upon all ſorts of Tranſactions in the World:

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the engaging of the Delilah, *and* plowing with the Heifer, *Judg*, 14. *&* 16. *being ever the surest way to undermine the Counsels, and master the force of the Stoutest* Samson. *And accordingly, Histories of all kinds assure us, that the* Gyneceum *has still had a Rival suffrage with the Senate. I might urge the more regular Powers which appertain unto that Sex; that all Mankind is the Pupil and Disciple of Female Institution: the Daughters till they write Women, and the Sons till the first seven years bepast; the time when the mind is most ductile, and prepar'd to receive impression, being wholly in the Care and Conduct of the Mother. And whereas 'tis observ'd by* Aristotle *in his Politicks, (and is a proof of his being as wise, as he was a Learned Man) that the Estate of Republicks entirely hangs on private families, the little Monarchies both composing and giving Law unto the great; 'tis evident that the disposal of Families and all*

Domestick

Domeſtick Concerns therein lies chiefly on the Wife; whence the ſame Ariſtotle *declares, that the* Spartans *notwithſtanding their ready addreſs to Empire by their great frugality, induſtry and military virtue, could have but half a happineſs, as failing on the part of their Wives. But waving theſe reflexions, I ſhall fix only on the perſonal accompliſhments of the Sex, and peculiarly that which is the moſt principal endowment of the rational nature, I mean their underſtanding. Where firſt it will be a little hard to pronounce, that they are naturally inferior to Men; when 'tis conſidered how much of extrinſick weight is put in the ballance to turn it on the Mens ſide. Men have their parts cultivated and improved by Education, refined and ſubtilized by Learning and Arts, are like an incloſed piece of a Common, which by induſtry and husbandry becomes a different thing from the reſt, though the natural turf own'd no ſuch inequality. And truly had*

women

Women the ſame advantage, I dare not ſay but they would make as good returns of it; ſome of thoſe few that have been tried, have been eminent in ſeveral parts of Learning. To omit the modern inſtances, Theano *after the death of* Pythagoras *kept up his School;* Socrates *confeſſes himſelf to have been inſtructed not only in Rhetorick by* Aſpatia, *but even in the higheſt Points of Philoſophy by* Diotime: *the* Roman *Story informs us of the deep wiſdom of* Tanaquil, Cornelia, Livia, *to paſs by others. And were we ſure they would have ballaſt to their ſails, have humility enough to poize them againſt the vanity of Learning, I ſee not why they might not more frequently be intruſted with it; for if they could be ſecured againſt this weed, doubtleſs the ſoil is rich enough to bear a good Crop. But not to oppoſe a received opinion, let it be admitted, that in reſpect of their intellects they are below men; yet ſure in the ſublimeſt part*

of

of humanity, they are their equals: they have souls of as divine an Original, as endleſs a Duration, and as capable of infinit Beatitude. That ſpiritual Eſſence, that ray of Divinity owns no diſtinction of Sexes; ſo that in this ſenſe alſo, that Aphoriſm of the Apoſtle holds good, there is neither Male nor Female, but all are one, *Gal.* 3. 28. *And ſure this is the one tranſcendent Excellency of Humane Nature. For alas, what value can comparatively be ſet upon all other Qualifications, which will finally leave us but like the Beaſts that periſh. And thus, as it is the higheſt pitch of their worth, ſo it is the ſafeſt ſubject of their Contemplations: other Knowledg, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks,* 1 Cor. 8. 1. may puff up, this only will edify.

As therefore when we would pride our ſelves, we uſe not to boaſt our meaner, but our beſt qualities: ſo let me ſolicit Ladies to be ſo juſt to themſelves, as not to take their own meaſures by any thing below this. Why ſhould

ſhould they take ſo low a level of Greatneſs, as to value themſelves upon a title which is but a bigger blaſt of air, when they may derive their deſcent from above the Stars; claim cognation with Divinity? Why ſhould they dote on the fictitious Image, of a perhaps more fictitious beauty, which their glaſs preſents them, when they need but look inward to ſee an infinitely fairer Idea, an emanation of the eternal Brightneſs? Indeed did they make a juſt eſtimate of themſelves in this reſpect, it would overwhelm the vanity of thoſe inferior things wherein they now have ſuch complacency; nor would they ſuffer their nobler part to be affronted by the unequal competition of their meaner.

But there is alſo another conſequent which would flow from that eſteem; they would ſolicitously preſerve what they ſo highly prize; it being natural for us to proportion our care to our value. They would be jealously vigilant againſt every thing, that might

might eclipſe the radiancy or contaminate the purity of their ſouls. 'Twas the advice of a Heathen Moraliſt, Revere thy ſelf; *and 'twas very wholſom counſel: for next our due veneration to God, a reverence to our ſelves is the moſt ſevere controler of all exorbitancies. How can a Soul that remembers its celeſtial extraction, wallow it ſelf in the mire, ſtoop to any ſordid degenerous practices? 'Tis ſaid of* Themiſtocles, *that ſeeing once a rich booty about the dead Corpſes of his Enemies, he toucht it not, but pointing to another, ſaid, Take thou that, for thou art not* Themiſtocles. *If then a little military fame could ſo elevate his thoughts, 'tis a ſhame that any who carry an immortal Spirit about them, ſhould not be raiſed above all the contemptible baits of this ſublunary World. Why ſhould they not with the like diſdain turn over all ſenſual inordinacies to meer Animals, and creatures that have no higher principle than that of ſenſe, whilſt themſelves ſoar up to*

thoſe

those more ſublimated pleaſures, which are at Gods Right Hand for evermore; *Pſal.* 16. 12.

We may therefore conclude, that what ever vicious impotence Women are under, it is acquired, not natural; nor derived from any illiberality of Gods, but from the ill mnagery of his bounty. He has placed within them a Pillar of Cloud and Fire, ſufficient to ſhelter and conduct them through all the ſtorms, all the intricacies that can occur in their journy to Canaan; *if they will forget that more intrinſic part of their being, live as if they were all body, reject the* Manna, *and rave after the* Quails, *that deſtruction which will thereby be induced, they muſt own to ſpring from themſelves. Let them not charge God fooliſhly, or think that by making them Women, he neceſſitated them to be proud, or wanton, vain, or peeviſh, ſince 'tis manifeſt he made them to better purpoſes; was not partial to the other Sex, but that having, as the*

Prophet ſpeaks, abundance of Spirit, *Mal.* 2. *he equally diſpenc'd it, and gave the feebleſt woman as large and capacious a ſoul as that of the Greateſt Hero.*

Nay give me leave to ſay farther, that as to an Eternal well being, he ſeems to have placed them in more advantageous circumſtances than he has done men. He has implanted in them ſome native propenſions, which (as I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to obſerve) do much facilitate the operations of Grace upon them. Beſides, there are many temptations to which men are expoſed that are out of their road. How hard is it for a man to converſe in the World, but he ſhall be importun'd to debauchery and exceſs, muſt forfeit his ſobriety to maintain the reputation of a ſociable Perſon? Again, how liable are they by a promiſcuous converſation among variety of humors to meet with affronts, which the Maxims of Honor will tell them, muſt (in ſpight of all Chriſts interdicts) be reveng'd? And this

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engages them in Quarrels, ſometimes in Murders. Now none of theſe are incident to women: they muſt in theſe and ſome other inſtances attaque temptation, violently raviſh guilt and abandon their Sex, the whole Oeconomy of their ſtate, e're they can diveſt themſelves of their innocency. So that God ſeems in many particulars to have cloſelier fenced them in, and not left them to thoſe wilder excurſions, for which the cuſtomary liberties of the other Sex afford a more open way. In ſhort, they have ſo many advantages towards Virtue, that though the Philoſopher made it one of his ſolemn acknowledgments to God, that he had made him a man, not a woman: yet I think Chriſtian women have now reaſon enough to invert that form, and to thank God that he made them women, not men.

But we know advantages which are only in ſpeculation, are lookt on with ſome diffidence, till there have been ſome practical experiment made of them; I ſhall therefore evi-

dence

dence the problem by demonſtration, and inſtance; deſiring my Readers to meaſure the poſſibilities of their arriving to eminent degrees of Virtue and Piety, by what others have attained to. I ſhall not fetch examples of Morality from Heathen Women, becauſe I am now upon an higher ſtrain; (yet many ſuch might be brought to the reproach of many Women, who pretending to more, fall infinitely ſhort of that:) 'tis Chriſtian Virtue that I am now recommending, and which has been eminently exemplified in many of their Sex. How many Women do we read of in the Goſpel, who in all the duties of aſſiduous attendance on Chriſt, liberalities of love and reſpect, nay even in zeal and courage, ſurpaſſed even the Apoſtles themſelves? We find his Croſs ſurrounded, his Paſſion celebrated by the avowed tears and lamentations of devout Women, when the moſt ſanguine of his Diſciples had denied, yea forſwore, and all had forſaken him. Nay, even Death it ſelf could not extinguiſh their love;

love. We find the devout Maries *designing a laborious, chargeable, and perhaps hazardous respect to his Corps. And accordingly, 'tis a memorable attestation Christ gives to their Piety, by making them the first witnesses of his Resurrection, the prime Evangelists to Proclaim those glad Tidings; & as a Learned man speaks, Apostles to the Apostles. Nor is the Devotion of that Sex to be found only in the sacred Records; the Primitive times have left us many Memorials of the like, and the Martyrologies are full of Female Sufferers of all ages and conditions, who by the fervor of their Zeal had overcome the timorousness of their Nature, and wearied the cruelty of their Persecutors. And as Women help to augment the number of Martyrs, so did they of Confessors also, in a stout owning, and diligent practice of Christianity. Queens and Empresses knew then no Title so Glorious as that of a nursing Mother to the Church, have often exchanged their Palaces for little Cells and*

Ora-

Oratories, and valued not their own Diadems in comparison with their Saviours Crown of Thorns. And though by a perpetual declination from that pristine Zeal, the instances have in every Age grown less numerous, yet none has wanted some very illustrious Examples. Nay even in our dregs of time, in this common decay of all good, there are, I doubt not, many who (according to their opportunities) transcribe the former Copies, live like People that know they must live hereafter, and present us yet with some specimen of ancient Virtue. Nay, to speak an impartial Truth, 'tis not to be denied, but the reputation of Religion is more kept up by Women than Men; many of the one countenancing it by their Practice, whereas more of the other do not only neglect but decry it. And now since Women are compassed about with so great a cloud of Witnesses, who by doing the thing, give the surest evidence that 'tis not unfeasible, why should any plead an impossibility?

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In matters of Vanity and Pomp they are not ſo eaſily diſheartned, no pattern of that kind can be ſet which will not induſtriouſly be imitated; nay in the greateſt inequality of materials for it. Why then ſhould their emulation leave them where only it could do them good? How comes it, that of thoſe who have equal principles of a ſpiritual Being, ſome live according to the Dignity of it; and others who ſee them do ſo, do yet live as if they aſſented to that Philoſophers Paradox, who ſaid Women had no ſouls; or at leaſt were of the Pythagorean *Sect, and lookt upon themſelves only as the Jails and Priſons of the former offending Spirits, which they reſolved to fit for a yet viler tranſmigration; give them the appetites of Beaſts before they aſſume the Bodies? This is indeed an unlucky Humility, that thoſe who in all other inſtances are apt to overween, ſhould here ſinck ſo much below themſelves. And I hope 'twill not appear an vncivil addreſs to perſuade them to a juſter*

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eſtimate of their own worth. And if what has been ſaid to that end may have any effect I ſhall not deſire a better Preparative to the enſuing Tract; ſince ſhe that duly conſiders her own capacity of Eternal Bliſs, and withal, the poſſibility of as Endleſs a Miſery, according as ſhe performs or neglects the ſeveral Parts of Duty, will ſure need no other incentive to the diligent Purſuit of it.

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Ladies Calling.

PART I. SECT. I.

Of Modesty.

1. IT is now many years since an Address was made to the Gentry of this Nation, to persuade them to that Virtue, which would be both their Pleasure and Reward. I cannot, I confess, boast any such Effect of that, as should much inspirit the hopes of a new Attempt; yet since we see in our proper secular Concerns, Defeats do many times animate no less than Success, I know not why in this more charitable Design I should sit down discouraged, Men usually raise not a siege up-

on the first repulse, but reinforce their Batteries, observe more curiously which are the most assailable, accessible parts, and accordingly dispose their assault: It will then be no unreasonable imitation in the present case, if after a successless Attempt upon the more impregnable Masculine part of the Gentry, I now essay the Feminine, whose native Softness and Gentleness may render them less apt for that resistance of good Counsel, wherein too many Men place their Gallantry.

2. I presume these to whom that little Tract was at first design'd, will be so willing to relinquish their Title, that I might without imputation of robbery, exchange my Patrons, and by a new Dedication supercede the labor of a new Book. And indeed, since what was there said, was founded more on the distinction of *Qualities* than of Sex, there would not need many razures to render it as proper for the one as the other; and I shall take so much advantage of it, as to assure the female Gentry, that they may there find much of the duty incumbent on them, in respect of that Rank and Condition they hold in the World: and therefore, though I shall sometimes make some reflexions on it; yet, as to the main, I shall think it the easiest course, as well for them as my self, to direct them thither.

3. But it may seem to have too much of the Pedant, to entertain new Scholars only with the cast or nauseated learning of the old; and when I remember I write to Ladies, who use to think the new-

newneſs of any thing a conſiderable Addition to its valu; I conceive my ſelf oblig'd as well in civility to their humor, as charity to their needs, to give them ſomething which they may own as their peculiar. And to render it the more unalienable, I ſhall affix it to their Sex, and make it the Subject of my preſent inquiſition, what in reſpect of that, are the proper and diſtinct Obligations, under which, by the aſſignment of God and Nature, they are placed.

4. *That* the Obligation to Moral and Chriſtian Vertues is in it ſelf univerſal, and not confin'd to any Sex or Perſon, is not to be denied: yet, as in humane Conſtitutions there are often Precepts, which (though not excluſive of any, do yet) more peculiarly and eminently level at ſome particular Rank or Order of Men; ſo in the Laws of God and Nature, there appears the like diſtinction. That All-wiſe Creator, who hath put peculiar proprieties & inclinations into his Creatures, hath accordingly deſign'd their actuatiug and improving them: and although in mankind, which differs not in ſpecies but ingender, the variety may ſeem leſs; yet there is ſtill enough to finde ſome diverſity, either in the kind or degree of duty. This ſure is ſhadowed to us in that particular caution given to the Jews, not to confound the habit of the ſeveral Sexes, *Deut.* 22. 5. and yet more clearly evinced in the Precept which the Apoſtles addreſs to Women, 1 *Tim.* 2. and 1 *Pet.* 3. Nay, this is ſo granted a Truth, that all Ages and Nations

have made ſome diſtinction between maſculine and feminine Virtues, Nature having not only given a diſtinction as to the beauties of their outward form, but alſo in their very mold and conſtitution implanted peculiar aptneſſes and proprieties of mind, which accordingly vary the meaſure of decencie; that being comely for the one Sex, which often is not (at leaſt in the ſame degree) for the other. It will therefore be no abſurd attempt to decipher thoſe excellencies, which are the genuine and proper Ornaments of Women: which though in ſome inſtances they may perhaps prove coincident with thoſe of Men; yet even thoſe which are equally incluſive of both, by the Divine Command may have ſome additional weight on the Female ſide, in reſpect of decencie, fame, or ſome other (not deſpicable) conſideration.

5. For the better directing our preſent inquiſition, it will be moſt regular, firſt to inquire what thoſe Virtues are which are univerſally neceſſary to Women in all Ages and circumſtances of their lives: ſuch which, like the firſt matter, are prerequir'd for all Forms; which, like a firm and ſolid Baſis, muſt ſupport all various events, all changes of their condition or relations. And ſecondly, we ſhall conſider them in thoſe changes, track them through the ſeveral ſtages and periods of life, through thoſe ſeveral ſtates which create the moſt conſiderable mutations to them; and in each of thoſe conſider, what are the new and proportionate acceſſions of duty.

6. A

6. As in the outward accommodations of life, the things of moſt daily and indiſpenſible uſe deſerve the greateſt value; ſo in moral or divine Endowments, the benefit of poſſeſſing is beſt meaſured by the miſery of wanting them. This firſt rank therefore of female Virtues which we are to treat of, will have that to recommend them; they being ſo ſtrictly neceſſary, that their abſence is not only a private ill, but alſo expoſes to a deluge of all poſitive miſchiefs conſequent to that privation.

7. *This* will be found true in all the ſeverals we are to paſs through, but in none more eminently than in that we ſhall chuſe to begin with, the Virtue of *Modeſty*; which may be conſidered in a double notion, the one as it is oppoſed to boldneſs, and indecency, the other to lightneſs and wantonneſs. In the firſt acception *Zeno* has not ill defined it, to be *the Science of decent motion*, it being that which guides and regulates the whole behaviour, checks and controles all rude exorbitancies, and is the great civilizer of converſations. It is indeed a Virue of a general influence; does not only ballaſt the mind with ſober and humble thoughts of ones ſelf, but alſo ſteers every part of the outward frame. It appears in the face in calm and meek looks, where it ſo impreſſes it ſelf, that it ſeems thence to have acquir'd the name of ſhameſacedneſs. Certainly, (whatever the modern opinion is) there is nothing gives a greater luſter to a feminine beauty: ſo that St. *Paul* ſeems not ill

to

to have conſulted their concerns in that point, when he ſubſtitutes that as ſuppletory ornament to *the deckings of Gold and Pearl and coſtly Array*, 1 *Tim.* 2. But I fear this now will be thought too antiquated a dreſs, and an Apoſtle be eſteemed no competent Judg in this Science; which is now become ſo ſolemn a thing, that certainly no Academy in the world can vie numbers with the Students of this Myſtery. Yet when they have ſtrein'd their art to the higheſt pitch; an innocent Modeſty, and native ſimplicity of Look, ſhall eclipſe their glaring ſplendor, and triumph over their artificial handſomneſs: on the other ſide, let a Woman be decked with all the embelliſhments of Art, nay and care of Nature too, yet if boldneſs be to be red in her face, it blots all the lines of beauty, is like a Cloud over the Sun, intercepts the view of all that was otherwiſe amiable, and renders its blackneſs the more obſervable, by being plac'd neer ſomewhat that was apt to attract the eyes.

8. *But* Modeſty confines not it ſelf to the face, ſhe is there only in ſhadow and effigie; but is in life and motion in the words, whence ſhe baniſhes all indecency and rudeneſs, all inſolent vauntings and ſupercilious diſdains, and what ever elſe may render a perſon troubleſome, or ridiculous to the company. Nor does ſhe only refine the language, but ſhe tunes it too, modulates the tone and accent, admits no unhandſome earneſtneſs or loudneſs of Diſcourſe; the

the later whereof was thought ſo undecent in *Carneades* (though in his publick Lectures) that the Gymnaſiarch reproved him for it: and ſure if 'twere not allowable in a Philoſopher in his School, 'twil leſs become a Woman in ordinary converſe; and if we conſult *Prov.* 7. 11. and 9. we ſhall find loudneſs and clamor in Women coupled with ſuch other epithites, as will ſurely not much recommend it. A Womans tongue ſhould indeed be like the imaginary Muſick of the Spheres, ſweet and charming, but not to be heard at diſtance.

9. *And* as Modeſty preſcribes the manner, ſo it does alſo the meaſure of ſpeaking; reſtrains all exceſſive talkativeneſs, a fault incident to none but the bold; the monopolizing of diſcourſe being one of the greateſt aſſumings imaginable, and ſo rude an impoſing upon the company, that there can ſcarce be a greater indecency in converſation: This is ingeniouſly expreſt by our Divine Poet *Herbert*,

A civil Gueſt,
Will no more talk all, than eat all the Feaſt.

He that engroſſes the talk, enforces ſilence upon the reſt, and ſo is preſumed to look on them only as his Auditors and Pupils, whilſt he magiſteriouſly dictates to them: which gave occaſion to *Socrates* to ſay, *it is arrogance to ſpeak all and to be willing to hear nothing.* It is indeed univerſally an inſolent unbecoming thing, but moſt peculiarly ſo in a Woman.

10. *The*

10. The antient Romans thought it so much so, that they allowed not that sex to speak publickly, though it were in their own necessary defence; insomuch that when *Amesia* stood forth to plead her own cause in the Senate, they lookt on it as so prodigious a thing, that they sent to consult the Oracle what it portended to the State: and though these first severities were soon lost in the successes of that Empire, *Valerius Maximus* could find but two more whose either necessity or impudence, persuaded them to repeat this unhandsome attempt.

11. *And* this great indecency of Loquacity in Women, I am willing to hope is the reason why that Sex is so generally charged with it; not that they are all guilty, but that when they are, it appears so unhandsome, as makes it the more eminent and remarkable. Whether it were from that ungracefulness of the thing, or from the propension Women have to it, I shall not determine; but we find the Apostle very earnest in his cautions against it, 1 *Cor.* 14. 35. he expresly enjoyns Women to *keep silence in the Church*, where he affirms it a shame for them to speak: and though this seems only restrain'd to the Eccleſiastical Assemblies, yet even so it reaches home to the gifted Women of our age, who take upon them to be Teachers; whereas he allowed them not speak in the Church, no not in order to Learning, though a more modest design than that of Teaching. But besides this, he has a more indefinit prescription of silence to Women, 1 *Tim.* 2. 11. *Let Women learn in silence;*

lence; and again, v. 12. *to be in ſilence*. The Apoſtle ſeems to ground the Phraſe, not only on the inferiority of the woman in regard of the creation and firſt ſin, v. 13, 14. but alſo on the preſumtion that they needed inſtruction, towards which, ſilence has alwaies bin reckoned an indiſpenſible qualification, the introductory precept in all Schools, as that wherein all attention is founded. If ſom women of our age think they have outgon that novice ſtate the Apoſtle ſuppoſes, and want no teaching; I muſt crave leave to believe, they want that very firſt Principle which ſhould ſet them to learn, *viz.* the knowledg of their own ignorance: a ſcience which ſo grows with ſtudy and conſideration, that *Socrates* after a long life ſpent in purſuit of Wiſdom, gave this as the ſum of his learning, *This only I know, that I know nothing*. This proficiency ſeems much wanting to our female Talkers, who, in this, ſeem to confute the common maxim, and give what they have not, by making their ignorance viſible to others, tho it be undiſcernable to themſelves; and to ſuch we may not unfitly apply the Sarcaſm of *Zeno* to a talkative Youth; *their ears are faln into their tongue*.

12. But beſides this aſſuming ſort of talkativeneſs, there is another uſually charged upon the Sex, a meer chatting, pratling humor, which maintains it ſelf at the coſt of their neighbors, and can never want ſupplies as long as there is any body within the reach of their obſervation.

This I would fain hope is moſt the vice of the vulgar ſort of Women, the education of the Nobler ſetting them above thoſe mean entertainments. Yet when 'tis remembred that St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. makes Tatling the effect of Idleneſs, it may not unreaſonably be feared, that where there is moſt of the Cauſe, there will be ſom of the Effect. And indeed, it would puzzle one to conjecture, how that round of formal Viſits among Perſons of Quality ſhould be kept up without this: that their Viſits ſhould be only a dumb Shew, none will ſuſpect among women; and when the unfaſhionable themes of Houſwifery, Piety, *&c.* are excluded, there will not remain many Topics of Diſcourſe, unleſs this be called in to ſupply. And this indeed is a moſt inexhauſtible reſerve, it having ſo many ſprings to feed it, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible it ſhould fail. And when 'tis farther conſidered, how apt a miniſter it is to Envy, Spleer, Revenge, and other feminine Paſſions, we cannot ſuppoſe it can be unacceptable where any of thoſe bear ſway. But I believe it is not more frequently introduc'd by any thing then the vanity of Wit, which has no where a more free and exorbitant range than in cenſuring and deriding; nay, finds not only Exerciſe but Triumph too, vain Perſons ſeldom conſidering the Infirmities or Follies of others, without ſom Complacencies, and aſſuming reflections on themſelves; which how unagreeable it renders this liberty of talking to that Modeſty we recommend, is obvious

vious enough, and would God 'twere only oppoſit to that; but it is no leſs ſo to all the obligations of Juſtice and Charity alſo, which are ſcarce ſo frequently violated by any thing, as by this licentiouſneſs of the tongue.

13. THERE is yet another vice of it, for which the female Sex has bin generally accus'd, and that is reveling of ſecrets; an infirmity preſum'd ſo incident to them, that *Ariſtotle* is ſaid to have made it one of the three things he ſolemnly repented of, that he had ever truſted a Secret with a Woman. But by how much the greater prejudice they lie under in this reſpect, the greater ought to be their caution to vindicate not only their perſons, but their Sex, from the imputation, which is indeed extremely reprochful: this blaſting humor being a ſymptom of a looſe, impotent ſoul, a kind of incontinence of the mind, that can retein nothing committed to it; but as if that alſo had its Diabetic paſſion, perpetually and almoſt inſenſibly evacuating all. And indeed however we are willing to appropriate this to the Sex, yet the fault is owing only to this ill conſtitution of the mind, which is oft-times no leſs viſible in men; as on the contrary, thoſe women who by reaſon and virtu have acquir'd a Solidity and Firmneſs of mind, are as ſure repoſitories of a ſecret, as the moſt maſculine confident: and ſuch I have no intent to involve in this charge, but rather by propoſing their example to the reſt, ſhew that nature has put them under no fatal neceſſity of being

thus impotent. A ſecret is no ſuch unruly thing, but it may be kept in: they may take the Wiſe man's word for it, *Eccluſ.* 19. 10. *If thou haſt heard a word, let it die with thee, and be bold, it will not burſt thee.*

14. THIS is a piece of daring manlineſs, which they may affect without breach of Modeſty; would God they would take it in exchange for that virile Boldneſs, which is now too common among many even of the beſt Rank. Such a degenerous age do we now live in, that every thing ſeems inverted, even Sexes; whilſt men fall to the Effeminacy and Niceneſs of women, and women take up the Confidence, the Boldneſs of men, and this too under the Notion of good Breeding. A bluſh (tho formerly reputed the color of Virtu) is accounted worſe manners than thoſe things which ought to occaſion it, and ſuch as nothing but the ſimplicity of a Country Girl can excuſe. But the infirmity for the moſt part proves very corrigible; a few weeks of the Town Diſcipline wears off that piece of Ruſticity, and advances them to a modiſh Aſſurance. Nor is that deſign'd to terminate in itſelf, but it is to carry them on, till they ariſe to a perfect Metamorphoſis, their Geſture, their Language, nay ſomtimes their Habit too being affectedly maſculine; ſo that what *Tacitus* ſpeaks of *Vitellius*, in relation to his being a Prince, we may apply to them, and ſay, that *If others did not remember them to be women, themſelves could eaſily forget it.*

15. YET

15. Yet were this affectation confin'd only to the more innocent indifferent things, 'twere more tolerable; but alas it extends farther, and there are women who think they have not made a ſufficient eſcape from their ſex, 'till they have aſſumed the Vices of men too. A ſober modeſt Dialect is too effeminate for them; a bluſtring ranting ſtile is taken up, and (to ſhew them proficients in it) adorn'd with all the Oaths and Imprecations their memory or invention can ſupply; as if they meant to vindicate their Sex from the imputation of Timerouſneſs by daring God Almighty. 'Tis true indeed, an Oath ſounds gratingly out of whatever mouth, but out of a womans it hath ſuch an uncouth harſhneſs, that there is no noiſe on this ſide Hell can be more amazingly odious; yet this is a muſic this diſcordant age hath introduc'd, no former having I think ever heard it in places at all civiliz'd: ſo that the female ſwearers want that poor ſhadow of excuſe the men pretend to, it having bin ſo far from cuſtomary, that the unwontedneſs could not but force them to ſome induſtry and pains, ere they could acquire the habit, and ſet up for female Hectors; an eſſay, wherein they have bin very kind to the maſculine, by ſhewing the world there can be ſomthing worſe.

16. 'Tis ſaid there want not ſome who compleat the demonſtration by the other parallel quality of Drinking alſo; a vice deteſtable in all, but prodigious in women, who put a double violence upon their nature, the one in the intemperance

rance, the other in the immodeſty; and tho they may take their immediate copy from men, yet (to the praiſe of their proficiency) they outdo their Exemplar and draw more near the original; nothing human being ſo much beaſt as a drunken woman. This is evident enough if we look only on the mere ſurface of the crime; but if we dive farther into its inferences and adherencies, the affirmation is yet more irrefragable. She who is firſt a proſtitute to Wine, will ſoon be to Luſt alſo; ſhe has diſmiſt her Guards, diſcarded all the ſuggeſtions of reaſon, as well as Grace; and is at the mercy of any, of every aſſailant. And when we conſider how much fuller the world is of *Amnons* then *Joſephs*, it will not be hard to gueſs the fate of that womans Chaſtity, which has no other bottom then that of mens. So that unleſs her vice ſecure her virtue, and the loathſomneſs of the one prevent attemts on the other; 'tis ſcarce imaginable a woman that loſes her Sobriety ſhould keep her honeſty: ſo that indeed I might more properly have made this reflection when I come to ſpeak of Modeſty in the ſecond notion of it, as it is oppos'd to Lightneſs and Wantonneſs, but it falls not much amiſs now, to be the introduction to it.

17. AND if we conſider Modeſty in this ſenſe, we ſhould find it the moſt indiſpenſible requiſite of a woman; a thing ſo eſſential and natural to the ſex, that every the leaſt declination from it, is a proportionable receding from Womanhood, but the

the total abandoning it ranks them among Brutes, nay ſets them as far beneath thoſe, as an acquir'd vileneſs is below a native. I need make no collection of the verdicts either of the Philoſophers or Divines in the caſe, it being ſo much an inſtinct of nature, that tho too many make a ſhift to ſuppreſs it in themſelves, yet they cannot ſo darken the notion in others, but that an Impudent woman is lookt on as a kind of Monſter; a thing diverted and diſtorted from its proper form. That there is indeed a ſtrange repugnancy to nature, needs no other evidence then the ſtrugling, and difficulty in the firſt violations of Modeſty, which alwaies begin with regrets and bluſhes, and require a great deal of Self-denial, much of vicious Fortitude, to encounter with the recoilings and upbraidings of their own minds.

18. I make no doubt but this age has arriv'd to as compendious arts of this kind, as induſtrious vice can ſuggeſt, and we have but too many inſtances of early proficients in this learning; yet I dare appeal even to the forwardeſt of them, whether at firſt they could not with more eaſe have kept their virtu then loſt it. Certainly ſuch are the Horrors and Shames that precede thoſe firſt Guilts, that they muſt commit a rape upon themſelves (force their own reluctancies and averſions) before they can become willing proſtitutes to others. This their Seducers ſeem well to underſtand, and upon that ſcore are at the pains of ſo many preparatory courtings, ſuch expence of preſents

preſents too; as if this were ſo uncouth a crime, that there were no hope to introduce it but by a confederacy of ſome more familiar vices, their Pride or Covetouſneſs.

19. THE beſt way therefore to countermine thoſe Stratagems of men, is for women to be ſuſpiciouſly vigilant even of the firſt approches. He that means to defend a Fort, muſt not abandon the Outworks, and ſhe that will ſecure her Chaſtity, muſt never let it come to too cloſe a ſiege, but repel the very firſt and moſt remote inſinuations of a temter. Therefore when we ſpeak of modeſty in our preſent notion of it, we are not to oppoſe it only to the groſſer act of Incontinency, but to all thoſe misbehaviors, which either diſcover or may create an inclination to it; of which ſort is all lightneſs of carriage, wanton glances, obſcene diſcourſe; things that ſhew a woman ſo weary of her honor, that the next comer may reaſonably expect a ſurrender, and conſequently be invited to the Aſſault. Indeed they are ſuch, that one would rather think them the reſult of many acts, then merely the Prologue to one, and that nothing but a cuſtom of private ſin could ſupply impudence enough to do what is ſo publicly ſcandalous; and where this is found in thoſe of any conſiderable age, charity itſelf can ſcarce paſs a milder cenſure. Yet poſſibly in thoſe of the youngeſt ſort, they may at firſt be taken up (as their dreſs is) merely in imitation of others, embrac'd implicitly upon the autority of

of thoſe, whoſe examples govern the modes. When a poor girle, who has ſtill ſo much of the child as to admire every thing that glitters, ſees theſe things uſed by the gay people of the world, 'tis no wonder if ſhe take theſe as part of their accompliſhments, and upon peril of that formidable calamity of being unfaſhionable, conform to them: Which yet does not ſo much extenuate the guilt of thoſe few ſeduced perſons, as it aggravates that of the Seducers, and atteſts the ſtrange corruption of the age, that thoſe things which the leſs hardned ſort of proſtitutes were formerly aſhamed of, ſhould now paſs into the frequency and avowedneſs of a faſhion, become a part of Diſcipline and Inſtitution of youth; as if vice now diſdain'd to have any punies in its ſchool, and therefore by a prepoſterous anticipation, makes its pupils begin where they were wont to end, initiates them at firſt into that ſhameleſneſs, which was wont to be the product only of a long habit: what the end will be of theſe Piqueerers in impudence, who thus put their vertu on the forlorn hope, is eaſie to divine. Yet is not this the only ſtate of danger: they who keep their ranks, and tho they do not provoke aſſaults, yet ſtay to receive them, may be far enough from ſafety. She that lends a patient ear to the praiſes of her Wit or Beauty, intends at firſt perhaps only to gratify her vanity; but when ſhe is once charm'd with that Sirens ſong, bewitcht with that Flattery, ſhe inſenſibly declines to a kindneſs for that perſon that

values her so much: and when that spark shall be blow'd up by perpetual remonstrances of Passion, and perhaps little Romantique artifices of pretending to dye for her, with a thousand other tricks, which lust can suggest, 'twill like the *Naptha* Naturalists speak of, in a moment grow to an unquenchable flame, to the ruine both of her vertu and honor.

20. LET no woman therefore presume upon the innocence of her first intentions; she may as well upon confidence of a sound constitution, enter a pest-house and converse with the plague, whose contagion does not more subtily insinuate it self, than this sort of temtation. And as in that case she would not stay to define what were the critical distance, at which she might approch with safety, but would run as far from it as she could; so in this, it no less concerns her, to remove her self from the possibility of danger, and (how unfashionable soever it be) to put on such a severe Modesty, that her very looks should guard her, and discourage the most impudent assailant. 'Tis said of *Philopemen*, that the *Lacedemonians* finding it their intereſt to corrupt him with mony, they were yet so possest with the reverence of his vertues, that none durst undertake to attaque him; and sure 'twere not impossible for women to arrive at the same security: such an autority there is in Vertue, that where 'tis eminent, 'tis apt to controle all loose desires, and he must not be only lustful but sacrilegious, that attemts to violate such a Sanctuary.

21. BUT

21. But perhaps that ſex may fear, that by putting on ſuch a Strictneſs, they ſhall loſe the glory of their Beauty, which is now chiefly eſtimated by the number of thoſe who court and adore them. To this in the firſt place I muſt ſay, that they are miſerable Trophies to Beauty that muſt be built on the ruins of virtu and honor; and ſhe that to boaſt the length of her hair ſhould hang herſelf in it, would but act the ſame folly in a lower inſtance.

22. But then ſecondly, 'tis a great miſtake to think their Beauty ſhall be the leſs prized, ſince 'tis incident to mans nature to eſteem thoſe things moſt that are at diſtance, whereas an eaſie and cheap deſcent begets contemt. So long as they govern themſelves by the exact rules of Prudence and Modeſty, their luſtre is like the Meridian Sun in its clearneſs, which tho leſs approchable, is counted more glorious; but when they decline from thoſe, they are like that Sun in a cloud, which tho ſafelier gazed on, is not half ſo bright. But beſides theſe collateral advantages, 'tis certain that Modeſty gives an immediat and direct improvement to Beauty; for tho men for their own vicious ends wiſh them ſever'd, yet they cannot but think they are the moſt amiable when united, and you ſhall hear them often commend the aſpect of that Modeſty, which they would fain circumvent.

23. But in the third place, there is nothing but ſuch a Reſervedneſs that can indeed make their

Beauty triumphant. Parly and conqueſt are the moſt diſtant things; and ſhe that deſcends to treat with an aſſailant, whatever he may tell her of his being her captive, 'tis but in order to the making her his; which when ſhe once is, there is no ſtate of ſervitude half ſo wretched, nothing in the world being ſo ſlaviſhly abject as a proſtitute woman. For beſides all the intereſt of another life which ſhe baſely reſigns, ſhe ſacrifices all that is valuable in this: her reputation ſhe puts wholly in his power that has debauched her, and which is worſe her reformation too. If ſhe ſhould have a mind to return to virtu, ſhe dares not for fear he ſhould divulge her former ſtrayings from it: ſo that, like *Catiline*, ſhe is engag'd to future evils to ſecure the paſt. Yea ſhe ſubjects herſelf not only to his luſt, but to all his humors and fanſies, nay even to all thoſe who have bin inſtrumental to their privacies, none of them all being to be diſpleas'd for fear of blabbing: and when 'tis remembred, what a ſort of cattel they are, which are the engines in ſuch affairs, there can ſcarce be any thing more deplorable than to be within their laſh. 'Tis true indeed, ſome have found a way to cure this uneaſineſs by being their own delators, not only confeſſing but boaſting their crime, and by an impudent owning prevent all accuſations: yet even this ſerves but to atteſt the intoleraleneſs of the former condition, when this worſt of miſchiefs is choſe as a reſcue. Their impatience of being always in awe; makes them take up that reſolution for

for infamy, which *Cæſar* did for death, who ſaid 'twas better to die once than to be always in fear. And tho this deſperate remedy may cure the fear, yet it aſcertains the reproch; for whereas in the impeachment of others there is place for doubt, and charity may promt ſome to disbelieve it, yet when the fact is juſtified by the offender, the evidence is uncontrolable, and withal doubles the infamy. For beſides that which adheres to the crime there is a diſtinct portion due to the impudence; yet like the Scorpion it muſt cure its own ſting, and tho it increaſes the obloquy, yet it deadens the ſenſe of it.

24. BUT when they have thus ſteel'd their foreheads againſt all impreſſions of Shame, they are ſtill liable to many other painful effects of their ſin. What fears of being abandoned, what jealouſies of rivals do often torture them? And indeed not without ground: for they cannot but know, that the ſame humor of variety which engaged their Paramors in their love, may do the ſame for another, and another, and ſo on; it being as poſſible to graſp the air, as to confine a wandring luſt. Beſides, what anxious apprehenſions have they of the approch of age, which they are ſure will render them loathed and deſpicable, as alſo of all intermedial decays of Beauty? How critically do they examine their glaſs? and every wrinkle that repreſents in their face, becomes a deep gaſh in the heart. But if they have at any time the leſure (or indeed the courage) to look

look inward, the view is yet more dreadful, a deform'd ſoul, ſpoil'd of its innocence, and rendred almoſt as brutiſh as the ſin it has conſented to. But tho it be in ſom reſpects *like the beaſt that periſheth*, it is not, it cannot be in that which would moſt avail it; an endleſs being it cannot loſe, nor can it expect any thing from that preeminence of its nature, but an infinity of miſery. This is ſuch an amazing contemplation, as, methinks, were it inſiſted on, ſhould allay the hotteſt blood; no impure flames being ſo fierce as to conteſt with thoſe of unquenchable fire. It is therefore tho a very impious, yet no unskilful artifice of thoſe, who would vitiate women in their manners, to corrupt them in their Principles, and by extinguiſhing all hopes or fears of another World, perſuade them to immerſe boldly into all the abominations of this. 'Tis ſaid, this is now an art of wooing, the modern Preludium to the baſeſt propoſals: it ſeems this age dares not truſt only to the former ways of ſeducement, fears there will not be women enough that will forget the intereſts of another World; and therefore is fain to ſet up a new party of others to disbelieve it. And I fear that deſign has bin too proſperous; many women are ſo much more concerned for their Bodies than their Souls, that they are contented the one ſhould be elevated upon the depreſſion and debaſement of the other; and whilſt with a vain tranſport, they can hear their outward form applauded as Angelical or Divine, they

they can very tamely endure to have their better part vilified and deſpiſed, deſin'd to be only a puff of air in their noſtrils, which will ſcatter with their expiring breath, or in the Atheiſt's phraſe, *wiſd. 6. 6. vaniſh as the ſoft air.* Whereas they ſhould conſider, that they who preach this doctrin to them, deſign it only to infer a pernicious uſe. 'Tis a maxim in Politics, that thoſe counſels are ſuſpiciouſly to be ſcan'd, which carry in their front the adviſers intereſt; which certainly is never more viſible then in this caſe, he that once gains this point, never needing to conteſt for all the reſt. For he that can perſwade a woman out of her ſoul, will ſoon command her body; and then what was at firſt his intereſt, becomes hers at laſt; and her wiſhes of the mortality of her ſoul, are much ſtronger then 'tis poſſible her belief of it could be: which confirms abundantly my affirmation of the ſervile, wretched condition of ſuch a perſon. For if we judg that a very ſevere ſlavery, which makes people deſirous to reſign a temporal being, what ſhall we think of that which provokes them to renounce an eternal?

25. And now by this gradation of miſchiefs we may judg of the deplorable ſtate of thoſe who have abandoned their Vertu; wherein I doubt not the conſciences of many cannot only atteſt, but much improve the deſcription; and all I ſhall ſay to ſuch, is, only to conſult that boſom monitor, which till they do, all Homilies will be inſignificant. My deſign was not therefore to tell them what

what they too well feel, but only to point out their wracks as warnings to others.

26. LET all thoſe therefore who are yet untainted, and by being ſo, have their judgments clear and unbiaſt, conſider ſoberly the miſery of the other condition, aud that not only to applaud, but ſecure their own; and when ever the ontward pomps and gaudy ſplendors of a vitiated woman ſeem, like that of *Creſus*, to boaſt their happineſs, let them look through that Fallacy, and anſwer with *Solon*, *that thoſe only are happy who are ſo at their end.* Their moſt exquiſit deckings are but like the garlands on a beaſt deſign'd for Sacrifice; their richeſt gems are but the chains, not of their ornament but ſlavery; and their gorgeous apparel, like that of *Herod*, covers perhaps a putrid body, (for even that doth not ſeldom prove their fate) or however, a more putrid ſoul. They who can thus conſider them, will avoid one great ſnare; for 'tis not alwaies ſo much the luſt of the fleſh, as that of the eyes which betrays a woman. 'Tis the known infirmity of the Sex, to love gaiety, and a ſplendid appearance, which renders all temtations of that ſort ſo connatural to them, that thoſe who are not arrived to a more ſober eſtimate of things, will ſcarce be ſecure. It will therefore be neceſſary for them to regulate their opinions, and reduce all ſuch things to their juſt valu, and then they will appear ſo trifling, that they can never maintain any competition with the more ſolid intereſts of

of Vertu and Honor. For tho those terms seem in this loose age to be exploded; yet where the things are visible they extort a secret veneration, even from those who think it their concern publicly to deride them: whereas on the other side a defection from them exposes to all the contemt imaginable, renders them despis'd even by those who betrai'd them to it, leaves a perpetual blot upon their Names, and their Family. For in the character of a woman, let Wit and Beauty, and all female accomplishments stand in the front; yet if wantonness bring up the rear, the Satyr soon devours the Panegyric, and (as in an Echo) the last words only will reverberate, and her vice will be remembred when all the rest will be forgot. But I need not declame upon this theme; the Son of *Syrach* has done it to my hand, in many passages, but especially *Eccluſ.* 23. to which I refer the Reader.

32. What hath bin already said, is, I suppose, sufficient to convince every woman how much it is her concern to keep her self strictly within the bounds of Modesty and Vertu. In order to which, there is nothing more important then a judicious choice of their Company; I mean not only for men, but women also: vice is contagious, and this especially has that worst quality of the Plague, that 'tis malicious, and would infect others. A woman that knows her self scandalous, thinks she is reprocht by the vertu of another, looks on her as one that is *made to reprove her waies*, as it is, *Wisd.* 2. 14. and therefore in her own defence

ſtrives to level the inequality, not by reforming her ſelf, (that ſhe thinks too hard a task) but by corrupting the other. To this end, ſuch are willing to ſcrew themſelves into an acquaintance, will be officiouſly kind, and by all arts of condeſcention and obliging, endeavor to enſnare a woman of reputation into their intimacy. And if they ſucceed, if they can but once entangle her into that cobweb-friendſhip; they then, ſpider-like, infuſe their venom, never leave their vile inſinuations till they have poiſoned and ruined her. But and if on the other ſide they meet with one of too much ſagacity to be ſo entrapped; if they cannot taint her Innocence, they will endeavor to blaſt her Fame; repreſent her to the World to be what they would have made her; that is in the Pſalmiſts phraſe, *ſuch an one as themſelves*, Pſal. 50. 24. ſo that there is no converſing with them, but with a manifeſt peril either of Vertu or Honor, which ſhould methinks be a ſufficient diſſwaſive. 'Tis true, 'tis not alwaies in ones power to ſhun the meeting with ſuch perſons, they are too numerous, and too intruding to be totally avoided; unleſs, as St. *Paul* ſays, 1 *Cor.* 5. 10. *one ſhould go out of the world.* But all voluntary converſe ſuppoſes a choice, and therefore every body that will may refrain that, may keep on the utmoſt frontiers of civility, without ever ſuffering any approch towards intimacy and familiarity.

33. AND ſure were this diſtance duly obſerved, it might be of excellent uſe, a kind of lay Excommuni-

munication, which might come very ſeaſonably to ſupply the want of the Eccleſiaſtic now out-dated. And this ſeems very well to agree with the ſenſe of *Solon*, the wiſe *Athenian* Law-giver, who, beſides that he ſhut the Temple-doors againſt them, interdicted them the ſacred Aſſemblies; made it one of his laws, that an Adultereſs ſhould not be permitted to wear any ornaments, that ſo they might in their dreſs carry the note of their infamy. Should we have the like diſtinction obſerved, I fear many of our gaieſt birds would be unplumed, and tho the ſame be not now an expedient practicable, yet the former is, and might be of very good uſe. For beſides that already mentioned of ſecuring the innocent, it might perhaps have a good effect on the guilty, who could not but reflect with ſom ſhame on themſelves, if they were thus ſingled out and diſcriminated; whereas whilſt they are ſuffered to mix with the beſt Societies, (like hurt Deer in an herd) they flatter themſelves they are undiſcernable.

34. BUT indeed the advantage of this courſe is yet more extenſive, and would reach the whole Sex, which now ſeems to lie under a general ſcandal, for the fault of particular perſons. We know any conſiderable number of ſmutty ears caſts a blackneſs on the whole field, which yet were they apart, would perhaps not fill a ſmall corner of it; and in this uncharitable age, things are apt to be denominated not from the greater but worſer part: whereas, were the precious ſe-

vered from the vile, by ſom note of diſtinction, there might then a more certain eſtimate be made; and I cannot be ſo ſevere to womankind, as not to believe the ſcandalous part would then make but a ſmall ſhew which now makes ſo great a noiſe.

35. BESIDES this I can ſuggeſt but one way more for women of honor to vindicate their ſex, and that is by making their own vertu as illuſtrious as they can; and by the bright ſhine of that draw off mens eyes from the worſer proſpect. And to this there is requir'd not only innocence, but prudence; to abſtain, as from all real evil, *ſo from the appearance of it too*, 1 Theſſ. 5 22. not, by any doubtful or ſuſpicious action, to give any umbrage for cenſure, but as the Apoſtle ſaies in another caſe, 2 Cor. 11. 11. *to cut off occaſion from them that deſire occaſion*; to deny themſelves the moſt innocent liberties, when any ſcandalous inference is like to be deduc'd from them. And tho perhaps no caution is enough to ſecure againſt the malicious, and the jealous; tho 'tis poſſible ſome black mouth may aſperſe them, yet they have ſtill *Plato*'s reſerve, who being told of ſom who had defam'd him, *'tis no matter ſaid he, I will live ſo that none ſhall believe them.* If their lives be but ſuch, that they may acquit themſelves to the ſober and unprejudiced, they have all the ſecurity can be aſpir'd to in this world; the more evincing atteſtation they muſt attend from the unerring Tribunal hereafter; where there lyes a certain appeal for all injur'd perſons who can calmly wait for it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of Meekneſs.

1. IN the next place we may rank Meekneſs as a neceſſary feminine Vertu; this even nature ſeems to teach, which abhors monſtroſities and diſproportions, and therefore having allotted to women a more ſmooth and ſoft compoſition of body, infers thereby her intention, that the mind ſhould correſpond with it. For tho the adulterations of art, can repreſent in the ſame Face beauty in one poſition, and deformity in another; yet nature is more ſincere, and never meant a ſerene and clear forhead, ſhould be the frontiſpiece to a cloudy tempeſtuous heart. 'Tis therefore to be wiſht they would take the admonition, and whilſt they conſult their glaſſes, whether to applaud or improve their outward form, they would caſt one look inwards, and examine what ſymmetry is there held with a fair outſide; whether any ſtorm of paſſion darken and overcaſt their interior beauty, and uſe at leaſt an equal diligence to reſcu that, as they would to clear their face from any ſtain or blemiſh.

2. BUT it is not nature only which ſuggeſts this, but the God of nature too, Meekneſs being not only recommended to all as a Chriſtian vertu, but particularly enjoin'd to women as a peculiar ac-

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compliſhment of their ſex, 1 Pet. 3. 4. where after the mention of all the exquiſit and coſtly deckings of art, this one *ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit*, is confronted to them, with this eminent atteſtation, that it is *in the ſight of God of great price*, and therefore to all who will not enter diſpute with God, and conteſt his judgment, it muſt be ſo too. Now tho Meekneſs be in it ſelf a ſingle entire vertu, yet it is diverſifi'd, according to the ſeveral faculties of the ſoul, over which it has influence; ſo that there is a Meekneſs of Underſtanding, a Meekneſs of the Will, and a Meekneſs of the Affections; all which muſt concur to make up the Meek and quiet ſpirit.

3. AND firſt for the Meekneſs of the Underſtanding, it conſiſts in a pliableneſs to conviction, and is directly oppoſite to that ſullen adherence obſervable in too many; who judg of tenets not by their conformity to truth and reaſon, but to their prepoſſeſſions, and tenaciouſly retain'd opinions, only becauſe they (or ſome in whom they confide) have once own'd them, and certainly ſuch a temper is of all others the moſt obſtructive to Wiſdom. This puts them upon the chance of a Lottery, and what they firſt happen to draw, determines them meerly upon the priviledg of its precedency, ſo that had *Mahomet* firſt ſeiz'd them, his tenure would have bin as indefeſable, as Chriſts now. How great the force of ſuch prejudices are, we may ſee by the oppoſitions it rais'd againſt Chriſtian doctrine in groſs at its firſt promulgation,

tion; the *Jews* blind Zeal for the Traditions of their Fathers, engaging them in the murder even of that very Meſſias whom thoſe Traditions had taught them to expect, and after in the perſecution of that doctrine which his Reſurrection had ſo irrefragably atteſted. And to juſtifie the propriety of this obſervation, to thoſe I now write to, 'tis expreſly affirm'd, *Acts* 13. 50. That they made uſe of the zeal of the female Proſelites for that purpoſe. *The* Jews *ſtirred up the devout and honorable women, and rais'd a perſecution againſt* Paul *and* Barnabas. So that 'tis no unſeaſonable advice to ſuch, to be ſure they ſee well their way before they run too fierce a carriere in it; otherwiſe the greateſt heat without light, does but reſemble that of the bottomleſs pit, where flames and darkneſs do at once cohabit.

4. But whilſt I decry this prejudicate ſtifneſs, I intend not to plead for its contrary extreme, and recommend a too eaſie flexibility; which is a temper of equal, if not more ill conſequence than the former. The adhering to one opinion can expoſe but to one error, but a mind that lies open to the effluxes of all new tenets, may ſucceſſively entertain a whole ocean of deluſions; and to be thus yielding, is not a Meekneſs but Servileneſs of Underſtanding. Indeed 'tis ſo great a weakneſs of mind, that the Apoſtle ſinks it ſomwhat below the impotence of women, and reſembles it to that of children, *Eph.* 4. 14. yet it ſeems the folly of ſome women had levell'd them with children

children in this matter, for the same Apostle takes notice of such, to whom as he gives the Epithet of silly, so the latter part of the Character speaks them incorrigibly so, *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledg of the truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 6. a description which if we compare with our times, we must think prophetic. For how many instances hath this age given us of women so led captive; who being either affected with the novelty, or seduced by the pretended zeal of a new teacher, have given up their understandings to him: and for a while this strong man has kept possession, but when a stronger than he hath come it has fared as with him in the Gospel, a louder zeal or a newer doctrine soon divides his spoils; and that by force of the very same principle on which he set up, which within a while undermines the latter also, and so successively; till the poor Proselite has bin hurried through all the mazes of wild error, and at last perhaps (like a palate distracted by too much variety) she fixes upon that which at first she most decried. This has bin eventually true in some, who setting out in the fiercest detestation of Popery, have wandred so long like the blinded *Syrians*, 2 King. 6. 20. that they have at last found themselves in the midst of *Samaria*; by an insensible circular motion bin brought about to that Religion, from which alone they designed to fly. So little do itching ears know whither they may be carried: and indeed the ear when infected with that prurient humor may vie Mischiefs

chiefs with the tongue, which St. *James* tells us *Ch.* 3. 15. *is* (tho a little member) *a world of iniquity.*

5. 'Tis therefore the moſt important concern of all, to fortifie that ſo aſſailable part; but 'tis eſpecially ſo of women, not only in reſpect of that natural imbecillity, which renders them liable to ſeducement, but alſo becauſe the opinion of their being ſo, makes them particularly aim'd at by ſeducers. For as he who is to put off adulterated wares, will chuſe the moſt unwary chapmen, ſo theſe Sophiſticators of Divinity, deſire the moſt undiſcerning Auditors. And truly that ſo many of that Sex are ſo, I do not ſo much impute to any natural defect, as to the looſe notions they have of Religion, of which they have perhaps ſom general confuſed apprehenſions, but have ſo little penetrated the depth of it, that they know not why they are *Chriſtians*, rather then *Turks*, why of the Church of *England*, rather then of that of *Rome*, or *Geneva*. And while they are thus unfixt, and have no better principle then cuſtom and compliance; they having nothing to anſwer to any the groſſeſt deceit that can be obtruded upon them, which for ought they know or have conſider'd, may be as true as any thing they formerly profeſt. Now when any one in this condition ſhall be aſſaulted, not only by the repeated importunities of falſe teachers, but alſo by ingeminated threatnings of hell and damnation, ſhe is like one awaked by the outcry of fire, and in that amaze will be apt to

run where-ever the first discoverer of her danger shall lead her.

6. I shall therefore most earnestly recommend it as the best Antidote against the poison of novel doctrins, to examin well the grounds of the old; for want of this it is that our Church has bin exposed to so many frivolous cavils, it being too incident to the perverse Pride of human nature, to speak evil of things we understand not. And had our she-zealots first consulted som sober guides, and from them understood upon what grounds the Practice as well as Doctrin of our Church was founded, they could not so easily have bin carried away *by every Wind of doctrin*, as the Apostle phrases it, *Eph.* 4. 14.

7. INDEED this is no more then common justice exacts, which forbids the condemning even the vilest malefactor unheard, (& unheard and not understood, are in this case terms equivalent) yet sure they owe something more to that Church from whose ministry themselves must confess to have derived their Christianity, in whose bosom they have bin cherisht, and consequently may plead a mothers right in them; so that unless possession, which fortifies civil rights, destroy the Ecclesiastic; she may challenge besides that natural justice, (which is the common due of humanity) a parental respect and reverence, a debt which is sure very ill answered by those, who cast off her obedience before they have at all considered what it is she commands. And if the abdicating a child be

be a thing ſo unnatural, as needs ſom very important cauſe to juſtifie it; the renouncing of a Parent muſt require a reaſon as far tranſcending that, as the guilt does, if it be cauſleſs; and ſuch it muſt inevitably be in all, who for want of due examination, ſuffer themſelves to be lead into groundleſs prejudices and diſguſts.

8. To prevent that guilt, and a multitude of others which ſpring from it; I muſt again repeat my Propoſal, that women of Quality (who are preſumed to want neither Parts nor leaſure for it) would a little look into the inſide of the Religion they profeſs; if it be a true one, 'twill bear the inſpection, truth never ſhunning the light; if it be not, the diſcovery cannot be too early. And indeed among the many remarkable impreſſes of truth our Church bears, this is one, that ſhe does not blindfold her Proſelites, leaves them the uſe of their diſcerning Faculty, and does not by obtruding upon them an implicit belief, force them to lay down their Reaſon when they take up their Faith. And now why ſhould not Ladies ſpend a few of their many idle hours in this inquiſition? I mean not to embark them in a maze of controverſies, but only to diſcern thoſe plain grounds of Truth on which our Church builds; which if well digeſted, will prove a better amulet againſt deluſion then the reading whole *Tomes* of Diſputations, more apt to diſtract then fortify their underſtandings. And had they thus done, had their minds bin ballaſted by ſober principles, ſo many of them

had never made up the triumphs of ſo many and ſo various ſeducers. And tho to ſuch this advertiſement may com too late (like aſſiſtance after a defeat) yet it may be a ſeaſonable caution to others, and to thoſe I offer it, as that very temper wherein conſiſts that rational Meekneſs of the underſtanding I would recommend to them, which is equally violated by a blind obſtinacy, or as blind a flexibility.

9. A ſecond ſort of Meekneſs is that of the Will, which lies in its juſt ſubordination, and ſubmiſſion to a more ſupream Aurority, which in Divine things is the Will of God; in Natural or Moral right Reaſon; and in human Conſtitutions the command of Superiors: and ſo long as the Will governs it ſelf by theſe in their reſpective Orders, it tranſgreſſes not the Meekneſs requir'd of it. But experience atteſts, that the Will is now in its depravation an imperious Faculty, apt to caſt off that ſubjection to which it was deſign'd; and act independently from thoſe motives which ſhould influence it. This God knows is too common in all Ages, all Conditions, and Sexes: but the Feminine lies more eſpecially under an ill name for it. Whether that have grown from the low opinion conceived of their Reaſon, leſs able to maintain its Empire, or from the multipli'd habitual inſtances themſelves have given of unruly Wills, I ſhall not undertake to determin; but either way 'tis, I am ſure, ſo great a reproch, as they ſhould be very induſtrious to wipe off. And truly

truly I know nothing more incentive to that endeavor, then the having a right eſtimate of the Happineſs as well as Vertu of a governable Will. How calmly do thoſe glide through all (even the roughest) events, that can but maſter that ſtubborn Faculty; A will reſign'd to God's, how does it enervated and enfeeble any calamity; Nay indeed it triumphs over it, and by that conjunction with him that ordains, may be ſaid to command even what it ſuffers. 'Twas a Philoſophical Maxim, that a Wiſe moral man could not be injured, could not be miſerable. But ſure 'tis much more true of him who has that divine Wiſdom of Chriſtian reſignation, that twiſts and inwraps all his choices with God's, and is neither at the pains nor hazard of his own elections; but is ſecure, that unleſs Omniſcience can be deceived, or Omnipotence defeated, he ſhall have what is really beſt for him.

10. Proportionable (tho not equal) to this, is the happineſs of a Will regulated by Reaſon in things within its Sphere: 'tis the dignity of human Nature, and that which diſtinguiſhes it from that of Beaſts. Yea, even thoſe grow more contemtible in their kinds, the farther they are removed from it. The ſtupid ſturdineſs of an Aſſe has render'd it Proverbial for folly, when the tractableneſs of other Animals has temted ſom to liſt them among rationals. Beſides, reaſon affords ſomthing of a Baſis and Foundation for the Will to bottom on. He that governs himſelf by reaſon,

reason (that being ſtill the ſame) will act equally and conſonant to himſelf; but he that does a thing this moment, only becauſe he will, may the next have as weighty an argument to do ſomthing quite contrary; and ſo may ſpend his whole time in unravelling his *Spiders webs*, as the Prophet rightly calls the vain deſigns of ſuch brutiſh men, *Iſa.* 59. 5. Not to ſpeak of thoſe recoilings and upbraidings of the rational faculties, which are the uneaſy attendants of thoſe who reſiſt its more direct admonitions; there is nothing expoſes to more ſecular ruins. An ungovernable Will is the moſt precipitous thing imaginable, and like the Devil in the Swine, hurries headlong to deſtruction; and yet deprives one of that poor reſerve, that faint comfort of the miſerable, Pitty; which will not be ſo much invited by the miſery, as averted by that wilfulneſs which cauſed it. Nay indeed, ſo little can ſuch perſons expect the compaſſion of others, that 'twill be hard for them to afford themſelves their own: the conſciouſneſs that their calamities are but the iſſues of their own perverſneſs, being apt to diſpoſe them more to hate then pitty. And this is no ſmall accumulation of wretchedneſs, when a man ſuffers not only directly, but at the rebound too; reinflicts his miſeries upon himſelf by a grating reflection on his own madneſs. Yea, ſo great an aggravation is it, that even Hell it ſelf is enhaunced and compleated by it; all the torments there being edged and ſharpned by the woful remembrance, that they might once have bin avoided.

II. In

11. In the laſt place a Will duly ſubmiſſive to lawful Superiors, is not only an amiable thing in the eies of others, but exceedingly happy to ones ſelf; 'tis the parent of peace, and order both public and private. A bleſſing ſo conſiderable, as is very cheaply bought with a little receding from ones own will or humor, whereas the contrary temper is the ſpring and original of infinit confuſions, the grand incendiary which ſets Kingdoms, Churches, Families, in combuſtion; a flat contradiction not only to the word, but even the works of God; a kind of Anticreative power, which reduces things to that Chaos from whence God drew them. Our age has given us too many and too pregnant inſtances of its miſchievous effects, which may ſerve to enhaunce the value of that governable malleable temper I now recommend. And as a Will thus reſign'd to Reaſon and juſt Autority, is a felicity all rational natures ſhould aſpire to; ſo eſpecially the feminine Sex, whoſe paſſions being naturally the more impetuous, ought to be the more ſtrictly guarded and kept under the ſevere diſcipline of Reaſon; for where 'tis otherwiſe, where a woman has no guide but her Will, and her Will is nothing but her Humor, the event is ſure to be fatal to her ſelf, and often to others alſo.

12. And the hazard of this renders that other reſtraint of the will, I mean that of obedience to Superiors, a very happy impoſition, tho perhaps 'tis not alwaies thought ſo, for thoſe who re-

ſiſt

ſiſt the government of Reaſon, are not very apt to ſubmit to that of Autority. Yet ſure God and nature do atteſt the particular expediency of this to women, by having placed that Sex in a degree of inferiority to the other. Nay farther 'tis obſervable, that as there are but three ſtates of life, through which they can regularly paſs, *viz.* Virginity, Marriage, and Widowhood, two of them are ſtates of Subjection, the firſt to the parent, the ſecond to the husband; and the third, as it is caſual, whether ever they arrive to it or no, ſo if they do, we find it by God himſelf reckon'd as a condition the moſt deſolate and deplorable. If I ſhould ſay this happens upon that very ſcore that they are left to their own guidance, the ſad wracks of many would too much juſtifie the gloſs; but however it evinces, that God ſets not the ſame valu upon their being maſterleſs, which ſom of them do, whilſt he reckons them moſt miſerable, when they are moſt at liberty.

13. And ſince Gods aſſignation has thus determined ſubjection to be the womens lot, there needs no other argument of its fitneſs, or for their acquieſcence. Therefore when ever they oppoſe it, the contumacy flies higher then the immediat Superior and reaches God himſelf. And I am apt to think there would not many of that timorous Sex dare ſo far, were it not for ſom falſe punctillioes of honor, which (like thoſe among or Duelliſts) have impoſed themſelves. Theſe repreſent Meekneſs and Submiſſion as a ſilly ſheepiſh quality unfit for women

men of breeding and ſpirit: whilſt an imperious obſtinacy paſſes for nobleneſs and greatneſs of mind. But alas they are wofully miſtaken in their notion of a great Spirit, which conſiſts in ſcorning to do unworthy and vile things, and courageouſly encountering the adverſe events of life, not in ſpurning at duty, or ſeeking to pull themſelves from that Sphere where the divine Wiſdom hath placed them. No ſure, ſtubborneſs is the mark only of a great ſtomac, not of a great mind; and the cruelty of a coward may as well denominate him valiant, as the ungovernableneſs of a woman can ſpeak her generous.

14. In this I preſume I ſpeak the common ſenſe of all, for what value ſoever they put upon themſelves, nothing renders them leſs acceptable to others; an imperious woman being a plague to her relatives, and a diriſion to ſtrangers, yea and a torment to her ſelf. Every the leaſt contradiction (which a meek perſon would paſs over inſenſibly) inflaming ſuch an unruly temper, and tranſporting her to ſuch extravagantes, as often produce very miſchievous effects. On the other ſide, if ſhe be humor'd and complied with, that ſerves only to make her more inſolent and intolerable; makes her humors grow to ſuch a height, that ſhe knows not herſelf what would pleaſe her, and yet expects that others ſhould: ſo that to ſuch a one, we may apply what *Hannibal* ſaid of *Marcellus*, that if he were vanquiſhed, he never gave reſt to himſelf, nor if he were victo-

rious, to others. Certainly the uneaſineſs of a perverſe ſpirit is ſo great, that could ſuch come but to compare it with the calm and happy ſereni-ty of Meekneſs and Obedience, there would need no other Lecture to commend them to their eſteem or practice.

15. The laſt branch of Meekneſs is that of Affections, and conſiſts in reducing the paſſions to a temper and calmneſs, not ſuffering them to make uproars within to diſturb ones ſelf, nor without to the diſquieting of others, and to this regulation Meekneſs is generally ſubſervient. Yet becauſe the correcting of ſom particular paſſions are more immediatly aſſignable to other vertues, I ſhall inſiſt only upon that, on which this has a more direct and peculiar influence, I mean Anger, a two-edged paſſion, which whilſt it deals its blows without, wounds yet more fatally within. The commotion and vexation which an angry man feels, is far more painful then any thing he can ordinarily inflict upon another: herein juſtify-ing the Epithet uſually given to Anger, that it is a ſhort madneſs, for who that were in his right wits, would incur a greater miſchief to do a leſs. It is indeed ſo great a diſtemper of the mind, that he that is poſſeſt with it is incompetent for any ſober undertaking, and ſhould as much be ſuſpen-ded from acting, as one in a Phrenſy or Lunacy. This was the judgment and practice too of *Plato*, who going to chaſtiſe a ſervant, and finding him-ſelf grow angry, ſtopt his correction; a friend coming

coming in and asking what he was doing, *punishing*, replies he, *an angry man*, as thinking himself unfit to discipline another, till he had subdued his own passion. Another time his slave having offended him, *I would beat thee, saies he, but that I am angry*. It were endless indeed to recite the black Epithets given by all Moralists to this vice. It shall suffice to take the suffrage of the wisest of men, one that had acquainted himself to *know madness and folly*, Eccl. 1. 17. and we find it his sentence, that *anger rests in the bosom of fools*, Eccl. 7. 11.

16. And what is thus universally unbecoming to human nature, cannot sure be less indecent for the gentler Sex: 'tis rather more so, every thing contracting so much more of deformity, by how much it receeds from its proper kind. Now nature hath befriended women with a more cool and temperat constitution, put less of fire and consequently of choler, in their compositions; so that their heats of that kind are adventitious and preternatural, rais'd often by fancy or pride, and so both look more unhandsomly, and have less of pretence to veil and cover them. Besides women have a native feebleness, unable to back and assert their angers with any effective force, which may admonish them 'twas never intended they shall let loose to that passion, which nature seems by that very unability to have interdicted them. But when they do it, they render themselves at once despised and abhorr'd; nothing

being more ridiculouſly hateful, than an impotent rage.

17. BUT as the moſt feeble Inſect may ſometimes diſturb, tho not much hurt us; ſo there is one *Feminine* weapon, which as 'tis alwaies ready, ſo proves often troubleſom, I mean the Tongue, which, tho in its loudeſt clamors can naturally invade nothing but the Ear, yet even that is a moleſtation. The barking of a *dog*, tho we are ſecure he cannot bite, is a grating unpleaſant ſound; and while Women ſeek that way to vent their rage, they are but a ſort of ſpeaking *brutes*, and ſhould conſider whether that do not reflect more Contemt upon themſelves, than their moſt *virulent* Reproches can fix upon others.

18. BUT ſome things have had the luck to acquire a formidableneſs no body knows how, and ſure there is no greater inſtance of it, then in this caſe. A clamorous woman is lookt on, tho not with reverence, yet with much dread, and we often find things don to prevent or appeaſe her ſtorms, which would be denied to the calm and rational deſires of a meeker perſon. And perhaps ſuch ſucceſſes have not bin a little acceſſory to the fomenting the humor; yet ſure it gives them little cauſe of triumph, when they conſider how odious it makes them, how unfit (yea intolerable) for human ſociety; let them take the verdict of *Solomon* who declares *it better to dwell* Prov. 25. 24. *in a corner of a houſe top, then with a brawling woman in a wide houſe.* Nor does the ſon of *Sirac* ſpeak

ſpeak leſs ſharply tho more ironically, *Ec.* 18. 16. *A loud crying woman and a ſcold, ſhall be ſought out to drive away the enemy.* And tho he taxes the *Feminine* vices impartially enough, yet there is ſcarce any of them which he more often and more ſeverely brands then this of unquietneſs. It ſeems 'twas a thing generally lookt on, as very inſufferable; as appears by *Socrates*, who when he deſign'd to diſcipline himſelf to perfect patience and tolerance, knew no better way of exerciſe, than to get a Shrew to his wife; an *excellence* that may perhaps again recommend a woman, when we fall to an age of Philoſophers; but at preſent twill be hard for any of our *Xantippes* to find a *Socrates*; and therefore that quality is as deſtructive to their intereſts in getting husbands, as it is to the husbands quiet when he is got. But I preſume I need not declame farther againſt this fault, which I ſuppoſe cannot be frequent among that rank of women to whom this tract is intended: for if neither moral nor divine Conſiderations have prevented it, yet probably civility and a gentile Education hath: a ſcold being a creature to be lookt for only in Stalls and Markets, nor among Perſons of quality. Yet if there be any that have deſcended to ſo ſordid a practice, they have ſo far degraded themſelves, that they are not to wonder if others ſubſtract that reſpect, which upon other accounts they might demand.

19. And to ſuch I ſhould recommend the uſual method of Phyſic, which is to cure by Revul-

ſion,

ſion, let that ſharp humor which ſo habitually flows to the tongue, be taught a little to recoile, and work inward; and inſtead of reviling others, diſcipline and correct themſelves: let them upbraid their own madneſs, that to gratifie an impotent, nay a moſt painful paſſion, have degenerated from what their nature, their qualities, their education, deſign'd them. And if they can thus reverſe their diſpleſures, 'twill not only ſecure others from all their indecent aſſaults, but it will at laſt extinguiſh them: for anger is corroſive, and if it be kept only to feed upon it ſelf, muſt be its own devourer; if it be permitted to fetch no forrage from without, nor to nuriſh it ſelf with ſuſpicious and ſurmiſes of others, nor to make any ſallies at the tongue, it cannot long hold out.

20. AND how much they will herein conſult their intereſt and their reputation too, they may be taught by *Solomon*, who makes it the diſtinctive *ſign of a fooliſh woman to be clamorous*, *Prov.* 9. 13. whereas when he gives the character of his Excellent woman, he links Wiſdom and Gentleneſs together, *ſhe openeth her mouth with wiſdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindneſs*, Prov. 31.26. If this verdict may be admitted (as ſure it ought, whether we conſider his wiſdom, or dear-bought experience in women) it will confute the common plea of querulous ſpirits, who think to ſeem inſenſible of any the leaſt provocation, is to appear ſilly and ſtupid; tho truly if it were ſo, 'twould

'twould be full as eligible as to appear mad and raving, as they commonly do in the tranſport of their fury.

21. To conclude, Meekneſs is ſo amiable, ſo indearing a quality, and ſo peculiarly embeliſhing to women, that did they but all conſider it with half the attention they do their more trivial exterior ornaments, 'twould certainly be taken up as the univerſal mode, in all the ſeveral variations of it this Section has preſented.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of Compaſſion

1. OF near Affinity to the Vertu of Meekneſs, is that of Mercy and Compaſſion, which indeed can ſcarce thrive in any place where the former hath not prepared the ſoil: Anger and Obſtinacy being like that rough Eaſt-wind which brought the Egyptian Locuſts, *Exod.* 10.13. to eat up every green thing in the Land. A mind harraſſed with its own impatiency, is not at leſure to obſerve, much leſs to condole the calamities of others. But as a calm and clear day befriends us with a more diſtinct Proſpect of diſtant Objects; ſo when all is quiet and ſerene within us, we can then look about us, and diſcern what exigencies of others invite our pitty.

2. I need not ſay much to raiſe an eſtimate of this Vertu, ſince 'tis ſo eſſential to our Nature, ſo interwoven in the compoſition of Humanity, that we find in Scripture phraſe, Compaſſion is generally ſeated in the moſt inward ſenſible part of our frame, the bowels, ſo *Col.* 3. 12. *Put on therefore bowels of mercy*; and *Phil.* 2. 1. *Bowels and mercies.* So that a cruel ruthleſs perſon unmans himſelf; and is by the common vote of mankind to be liſted among brutes; nay not among the better, but only the more hateful, noxious ſort of them.

3. But

3. But this is yet more unnatural in the female Sex, which being of softer mold, is more pliant and yielding to the impressions of pitty, and by the strength of fancy redoubles the horror of any sad object; yea so remarkable is this tenderness, that God, when he would most magnify his own compassion, illustrates it by that of Women, as the highest human instance. Indeed such a propension have women to commiseration, that they are usually taxed with an excess in it; so that any imprudent lenity is Proverbially called, A Womanish Pitty, and therefore it may be thought an impertinence to exhort them to that which they can scarce avoid. But to this I answer; first that in this degenerous age, 'tis no news to see people violate their instincts, as well as their duties, and be worse then their nature inclines them; many sins being committed even against the grain, and with violence to constitution.

4. Yet secondly, 'tis not a meer melting of the eyes, or yerning of the bowels I design to recommend: Alas, their tears will not be drink to a thirsty soul, nor will shivering at his nakedness clothe him: this is such an insignificant mercy as St. *James* describes, saying to a brother or sister, *be ye warmed, be ye filled, but not giving them things needful to the body*, c. 2. 1. Indeed she that weeps over those distresses she will not relieve, might have bin fit to be enter'd in the list of the mourning women among the Jews and Heathens, who were hired to make up the Tragic Pomp of

Funerals with their mercenary ſorrow, but had no real concern in that loſs they ſeemed to bewail. 'Tis therefore a more active ſort of Compaſſion to which I would invite them; and yet for method ſake, I ſhall conſider it under two diſtinct Heads, Giving, and Forgiving.

5. BY Giving, in this place, I mean not a general liberality, (tho that prudently bounded, is an Excellence well becoming Perſons of Fortune) but only ſuch a Giving as terminates upon the needy, and is applied to ſuccor their indegencies. To give to thoſe from whom they may expect returns, may be a deſign, but at the beſt can be but generoſity and frankneſs of humor. 'Tis only then mercy (as Chriſt Himſelf has defined it) when it is to thoſe from whom they can *hope for nothing again.*

6. AND in this Vertu women have in former Ages eminently excelled, yea ſo eſſential was it, that we find *Solomon* thought not their character compleat without it, but numbers it among the properties of his Vertuous Woman, *Prov.* 31. 20. *She ſtretcheth forth her hand to the poor, and reacheth her hand to the needy.* And it is a little obſervable, that after he has deſcribed her Induſtry and Diligence for the acquiring of Wealth, this is ſet in the front of her diſburſments, as the principal uſe ſhe made of it; and precedes her providing Scarlet for her Houſhold, or fine Linnen and Purple for her ſelf, v. 21, 22. The application is very obvious, and admoniſhes all that own the ſame

Title

Title of Vertuous Women, to prefer the neceſſities of others before their own ſuperfluities and delicacies. Nay, if they look farther, and conſider who it is that is perſonated in the poor, that begs in every needy diſtreſt ſuppliant, and that will finally own every act of mercy as don to himſelf: methinks they ſhould ſomtimes think fit to ſacrifice even their moſt moderate enjoyments to their charity; be aſhamed to ſerve themſelves before their Savior, or let him ſtand naked and hungry, whilſt they are ſolacing with that which would relieve him.

7. BUT how then ſhall they anſwer it, who ſuffer him to be ſupplanted, not by their needs, but exceſſes; who have ſo devoted their hearts and purſes to vanity and luxury, that they have neither will nor power to ſuccor the wants of others? How unequal and diſproportionate is it, that thoſe who ſtudy to fling away money upon themſelves, cannot be temted by any opportunity and diſtreſs, to drop an alms to the poor; What a prepoſterous ſight is it to ſee a Lady, whoſe gay Attire gives her the glittering of the Sun, yet have nothing of its other properties, never to cheer any drooping, languiſhing creature by her influence? 'Tis the counſel of the ſon of *Sirach*, *not to give the poor any occaſion to curſe thee*, Ecclus. 4.5. But ſure ſom perſons do it, if the poor happen not to have more Charity then they exemplify to them. For when they ſhall find ſuch hard hearts under ſuch ſoft raiment, ſee them beſtow

ſo much upon the decking their own bodies, and do nothing towards the neceſſary ſupport of theirs; 'tis a ſhrewd trial of their Meekneſs. Poverty is apt of it ſelf to imbitter the ſpirit, and needs not ſuch an additional temtation.

8. NAY farther, when a poor ſtarving wretch ſhall look upon one of theſe gay creatures, and ſee that any one of the baubles, the looſeſt appendage of her dreſs; a fan, a buſk, perhaps a black patch, bears a price that would warm his emty bowels; will he not have ſharp incitations not only to execrate her pride, and his own poverty, but conſequently to repine at the unequal diſtribution of Providence, & add ſin to his miſery? The denial therefore of an alms may be a double cruelty, to the ſoul as well as to the body. 'Tis ſaid of *Xenocrates*, that a chaſed Bird flying to his boſom, he reſcued it with much ſatisfaction, ſaying, He had not betraid a ſuppliant; but this is in that caſe reverſt, and in a higher inſtance; for what can be more the betraying of a ſuppliant, then inſtead of ſupplying his wants, to rob him of his innocence, and be his ſnare in lieu of his refuge? This is a conſideration I wiſh more deeply impreſt upon the Women of this Age; and truly 'tis their concern it ſhould be ſo: for ſince at the laſt day the inqueſt ſhall be ſo particular upon this very thing, 'tis but neceſſary they ſhould examin how they are fitted to paſs that teſt.

9. LET them therefore keep a preparatory audit within their own breſt, reflect upon the ex-

pences

pences of their vanity, what the delicacy of their food, what the richnes & variety of their clothes, nay what the meer hypocrisies of their dress, in false hair, and complexion has cost them; to which they may also add the charge of their recreations and divertisements, those costly arts of chasing away that time, which they will one day wish to recal: let them I say compute all this, and then confront to it the account of their charity, and I much fear the latter will with many of them be comparatively as undiscernable, as *Socrates* found *Alcibiades's* Lands in the Map of the whole World, be so perfectly overwhelm'd, that it will appear little in their own sight, and nothing in Gods.

10. For if the poor Widows mite acquired a valu meerly from her poverty, that she had no more; by the rule of contraries we may conclude how despicable the scanty oblations of the rich are in God's account. If even their liberality who gave much, was outvied by a farthing, *Mar.* 12. 41. to what point of diminution must their niggardly offerings, who give little, be reduced? especially when they shall be compared with the numerous and costly sacrifices they make to Pride and Luxury; nay, I wish some were not guilty of more than the disproportion, even the total omission of charity, that in a multitude of Tailors bills cannot produce the account of one Garment for the poor, that amidst the delicacies of their own diet (nay perhaps of their dogs too) never order'd so much as the crumbs of their Table to any

hungry

hungry *Lazarus*. But let all ſuch remember, that there will come a time, when one of *Tabitha's* coats, *Acts* 9. 39. will be of more valu than all their richeſt Wardrobes, tho they could number Gowns with *Lucullus's* Cloaks, which the *Roman* Story reports to be 5000. and that when their luxurious fare ſhall only feaſt the worms, and render them paſſive in that *Epicuriſm* they acted before, they will wiſh they had made the bellies of the poor the *Refectory*, and by feeding them, nuriſhed themſelves to immortality.

II. LET this I ſay be ſeriouſly remember'd now, leſt hereafter they fall under they ſame exprobrating remembrance with the rich man in the Goſpel, Luke 16. 25. *Remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and* Lazarus *that which was evil, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* A Text which St. *Gregory* profeſſes was ever ſounding in his ears, and made him look with ſuſpicion and dread upon that grandeur to which he was advanced, as fearing it might be deſign'd as his final reward. With what terror then may thoſe look upon their preſent good things, who by ingroſſing them wholly to themſelves, own them as their entire portion, and implicitly diſclaim their ſhare of the future? For to that none muſt pretend, who receive their tranſitory goods under any other notion, than that of a Steward, or Factor: as we may ſee in the Parable of the Talents, where thoſe that had the reward of the five and ten Cities were not ſuch as had conſumed their

their Talents upon their own riot and exceſſes, but ſuch as had induſtriouſly employed them according to the deſign of their Lord: and if it there fared ſo ill with the meer unprofitable ſervant, who had horded up his Talent, what ſhall become of thoſe, who ſquander away theirs, and can give no account either of uſe or principle?

12. Were theſe Conſiderations duly laid to heart, we might hope to ſee ſome of the primitive charity revive, when women of the higheſt rank converted their ornaments and coſtly deckings into clothing for the poor, and thought no retinue ſo deſirable, ſo honorable as a train of Alms-folks: but I ſpeak improperly, when I make the poor their attendants, for indeed they rather attended the poor, did not only order the ſupply of their wants, but were themſelves their miniſters, waited about their ſick beds, dreſt their moſt loathſom ulcers, and deſcended to all the moſt ſervile offices about them.

13. But theſe were ſuch heights, ſuch tranſcendencies of mercy, as required a deeper foundation of humility then will now be often met with: yet let me take the occaſion to ſay, that it may be a good managery of a charity to act (as far as they can) perſonally in it. For beſides that it prevents ſome abuſes and frauds, which deputed agents may ſomtimes be temted too, they pay God a double tribute in it, of their perſons as well as their fortunes; next they bring themſelves into acquaintance with the poor, and by that means

correct

correct thoſe contemts and nice diſdains, which their own proſperity is too apt to create; farther yet, they excite their own compaſſion, which being a motion of the ſenſitive part of the mind, cannot be ſtirr'd ſo effectually by any thing, as by the preſence of the object; the moſt pathetic tragical deſcription of a diſtreſs, being not able to affect us half ſo much as one ocular demonſtration. Laſtly tis an apt means to increaſe their thankfulneſs to Almighty God, whoſe bounty to themſelves muſt needs make a deeper impreſſion, when 'tis compared with the neceſſitous condition of others: for things are beſt illuſtrated by their contraries, and 'tis too obſervable in our depraved nature, that we valu not things by their real poſitive worth, but comparatively as they excel others; nor ever make a right eſtimate of what we enjoy, till our own or others wants inſtruct us.

14. UPON all theſe conſiderations it may be a very becoming uſeful circumſtance in any charitable miniſtery to be themſelves the actors; and to that end 'twill be a very commendable induſtry to qualifie themſelves to be helpful to the poor in as many inſtances as they can; not only opening their purſes, but diſpenſatories too, providing medicines for ſuch as either by diſeaſe, or caſualty want that ſort of relief. A charity which I doubt not is practiſed by many, and I wiſh it were by more; that our nicer Dames who ſtudy only Cosmeties for themſelves, would change the Scene, and inſtead

inſtead of repairing or diſguiſing their own complexions, ſtudy the reſtauration of their decrepit patients limbs. And ſure tho it be alas faſhionable, 'tis a much better ſight, to ſee a Lady binding up a ſore, then painting her face; and ſhe will caſt a much ſweeter ſavor in Gods noſtrils, with the ſmell of unguents and balſoms, then with the moſt exquiſit odors and perfumes. For ſince God profeſſes *Eſay* 1. that that very *incenſe* which was deſign'd as a part of his worſhip, *is an abomination to him*, becauſe not accompanied with the acts of Mercy, we cannot think he will better like of thoſe, which have no higher aim then delicacy and ſenſuality.

15. But beſides this part of mercy in giving, there is another, that of forgiving, which may happen to be of a larger extent then the former: for whereas that was confin'd to the poor, this has no ſuch limits, but as it is poſſible to be injured by perſons of all ranks, ſo this pardoning mercy is to each equally with that poſſibility. This is that part of Charity which we peculiarly call Clemency, a Vertu which not only Chriſtianity but Morality recommends. The Ancient *Romans* had it in ſuch veneration, that they number'd it not only among Vertues but Deities, and built it a Temple: and they were ſomwhat towards the right in it, for it was, tho not God, yet ſo eminent an attribute of his, that nothing can more aſſimilate man unto him.

16. THERE are many Heroic acts of this kind to be met with among the vertuous Heathens. *Lycurgus* not only forgave *Alcander* who had struck out his eye, but entertain'd him in his house, and by his gentle admonitions reclaim'd him from his former vicious life. *Aristides* being after signal services and without crime, unjustly banished by his Citizens, was so far from acting or imprecating against them, that at his departure from *Athens* he solemnly praied the Gods, that they might never by any trouble or distress be forced to recal him. So *Phocion* being unjustly condemned, left it as a solemn charge to his son *Phocas*, that he should never revenge his death. A multitude of the like examples might be produced, but we need not borrow light from their faint Tapers, when we have the Sun beams, I mean the Sun of righteousness our blessed Savior, who as he has recommended this grace by his precept, so he has signally exemplified it to us in his practice; the whole design of his descent to earth being only to rescue his enemies from destruction, and as every part of his life, so the last Scene of it was particularly adapted to this end, and his expiring breath expended in mediating for his crucifiers; *father forgive them*, Luk. 23. 34. And this copy of his was transcribed by his first followers, the Primitive Christians in their severest Martyrdoms praying for their persecutors.

17. THUS are we in the Apostles phrase *compassed about with a cloud of witnesses*, Heb. 12.

of eminent examples, which ought to have a forcible influence upon all, but me thinks ſhould not fail to have it on that Sex, whoſe native tenderneſs prediſpoſes them to the Vertu, and who need but ſwim with the ſtream of their own inclinations. How can we think that their melting eyes ſhould ever ſparkle fire, or delight in ſpectacles of cruelty, that their flexible tender hearts ſhould turn into Steel or Adamant, be uncapable of all impreſſions of pitty? Yet God knows ſuch changes have too often bin ſeen: women have not only put off that ſoftneſs peculiar to them, but the common inſtincts of humanity, and have exceeded not only ſavage men, but beaſts in cruelty. There have bin too frequent inſtances of the implacable malice, and inſatiable cruelties of women: I need not call in the aid of Poetique fiction, and tell them of *Clytemneſtra*, *Medea*, or the *Belides*, with hundreds of others, celebrated as inſtances of Heroic wickedneſs. There are examples enough in more authentic Stories, The *Roman Tullia*, the *Perſian Paryſatis*; and that we may not paſs by the ſacred Annals, *Jezebel*, and *Athalia*. I forbear to multiply examples of this kind, of which all ages have produced ſome ſo eminent, as have render'd it a common obſervation, that no cruelty exceeds that of an exaſperated woman: and it is not much to be wonder'd at, ſince nothing can be ſo ill in its priſtine ſtate as that which degenerates from a better. No enmity we know ſo bitter, as that of alienated friends; no ſuch perſecution as

that of Apostats, and proportionably no such so rity as that of a perverted mildness. So that the Poets were not much out, who as they represented the Graces under the figures of women, so they the Furies too. And since 'tis in their election which part they will act, they ought to be very jealous over themselves. The declinations to any vice are gradual, sometimes at first scarce discernable; and probably the greatest monsters of cruelty, would at the beginning have detested those inhumanities which afterwards they acted with greediness.

18. It concerns them therefore toward those beginnings whose end may be so fatal. She that is quick in apprehending an affront perhaps will not be so quick in dismissing that apprehension; and if it be permitted to stay, 'twill quickly improve, twenty little circumstances shall be suborn'd to foment it with new suspitions, till at last it grow to a quarrel; from thence to hatred, from that to malice, and from that to revenge: and when that black passion has overspread the mind, like an Egyptian darkness it admits no gleam of reason or Religion, but hurries them blindfold to their own ruine often as well as others.

19. Let none think this only a fancy or scheme of Discourse: there have bin too many tragical experiments of its truth. How many men have bin mortally engaged upon no weightier original, then the spleen of a woman? the frantic notion of honor among our Duellists fitly corresponding with the as frantic impulses of feminine revenge,

and

and any imaginary injury (or perhaps but just imputation) to the Lady, obliging her Gallant to rush upon the most real sin and danger. A madness somthing beyond that which the Romances describe of Knight Errantry; for that generally is for the relief of distressed Damsels, but this is only to humor the too prosperous ones, the insolent and the proud. Those therefore that have observed the common occasions of Duels, have not unfitly divided them between Wine and Women; it being hard to say which is the most intoxicating and besotting. The Son of *Sirach* couples them together, *Eccles.* 19. 2. *Wine and Women will make men of understanding fall away.* The many modern examples of this mischief, as it should strike an extreme terror into those Women who have bin any way accessary to the death, or but danger of any man; so it is just matter of caution to all, so to regulate their Passions, that they never come within distance of implacability; for if once they arrive there, themselves can give no stop.

20. In order to this, 'twill be well to consider at the first incitation, what the real ground is; perhaps sometimes they are angry (as the Galatians were at St. *Paul, Gal.* 4. 16.) *at those that tell them the truth*; som scandalous, or at least suspicious behavior, may have engaged a friend to admonish them; (an office that has sometimes proved very fatal; those commonly that have most guilt having less patience to hear of it.) And if this be the case, 'tis the greatest injustice in the world to

to make that a quarrel which is really an obligation: and therefore inſtead of maligning their Monitor, they ought to thank and reverence him. Nay, tho the accuſation be not with that candid deſign, but be meant as a reproch; yet if it be true, it ſhould not excite anger at their accuſers, but remorſe, and reformation in themſelves.

21. IT was the ſaying of a Wiſe man, that he profited more by his enemies then his friends; becauſe they would tell him more roundly of his faults: and this is excellently improved by *Plutarch*, in his Tract, Of the benefits to be reap'd from Enemies: ſo that even a malicious accuſation may be a kindneſs, and conſequently ought not to be repaid with an injury. But ſuppoſe, in the laſt place, that the aſperſion be not only unkind, but untru, it will not even then be ſafe to let looſe to their indignation: firſt, in reſpect of Prudence, an angry vindication ſerving the deſign of the enemy, and helping to ſpread the calumny; whereas a wiſe neglect and diſſembling does often ſtifle and ſuppreſs it. Secondly, in reſpect of duty, for all that own themſelves Chriſtians, muſt confeſs they are under an obligation to forgive, and not to revenge. Now if they intend to pay a real obedience to this Precept, 'twill be the more eaſie, the ſooner they ſet to it. He that ſees his houſe on fire, will not dally with the flame, much leſs blow, or extend it, reſolving to quench it at laſt. And anger is as little to be truſted, which if once throughly kindled, will ſcarce expire

pire but with the destruction of the subject it works on.

22. Let therefore the disoblig'd not look back upon the injury, but forward to those mischiefs which too sharp a resentment may betray them to: let them consider, that the boiling of their blood may finally cause the effusion of anothers, and wrath may swell into murder. If they would do thus, and instead of those magnifying optics wherein they view the wrong, make use of the other end of the perspective, to discern the dismal event at distance; it would sure fright them from any nearer approch, would keep them within those bounds which their duty prescribes them; and thereby acquaint them with a much greater, and more ingenious pleasure then their highest revenge can give them: I mean that of forgiving injuries, and obliging the injurious. This is a pleasure so pure and refined, so noble and heroic, that none but rational natures are capable of it; whereas that of spight and revenge (if it can be called a pleasure) is a meer bestial one; every the most contemtible animal can be angry when 'tis molested, and endevor to return the mischief.

23. It should therefore, methinks, be an easy determination, whether to embrace that clemency and compassion which we see exemplified in the wisest and best of men, nay in the Omniscient, Immortal God, or that savage fierceness of the ignobleſt creatures. This is certain, that no woman

man would be content to assume the outward form of any of those; why then should they subject their nobler part, the mind, to such a transformation? For, as there are no monsters so deformed, as those which are compounded of man and beast; so among them all, nothing can be more unnatural, more odious, then a woman-Tiger. I conclude all with the advice of *Salomon*, *Prov.* 17. 14. *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before it be medled with.* When once a breach is made upon the spirit by immoderate anger, all the consequent mischiefs will flow in, like a rapid stream when the banks are broken down; nor is there any way to prevent it, but by keeping the mounds entire, preserving that tenderness and compassion which God and Nature do equally inforce and recommend.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Of Affability.

1. IN the next place we may reckon Affability and Courteſie, which as it is amiable in all, ſo it is ſingularly ſo in women of Quality, and more univerſally neceſſary in them then in the other Sex; for men have often charges and employments which do juſtify, nay perhaps require ſomwhat of ſternneſs and auſterity; but women ordinarily have few or no occaſions of it, and thoſe who have well digeſted the former Lectures of Meekneſs and Compaſſion, will not be apt to put it on unneceſſarily. Now Affability may be conſidered either as a meer human Accompliſhment, or as a divine Vertu; in either notion 'tis commendable; but 'tis the latter that gives it the higheſt Excellence and Perfection.

2. To begin with the firſt notion of it, we may take an eſtimate of its worth by its Cauſe, and by its Effects. For its Cauſe, it derives it ſelf either from a native candor, and generoſity of mind; or from a noble and ingenious Education, or ſomthing joyntly from both; and theſe are as good originals as any thing meerly moral can flow from. And that theſe are indeed its ſources, common experience will atteſt: thoſe of the greateſt Minds, and beſt Extractions, being uſually

moſt condeſcending and obliging; whereas thoſe of moſt abject Spirits and Birth, are the moſt inſulting and imperious. *Alexander* the Great, tho terrible in the field, yet was of a gentle, complaiſant converſation, familiarly treating thoſe about him: yet *Criſpinus*, *Narciſſus*, *Nymphidius*, and other enfranchiſed bondmen, we find inſolently trampling upon the Roman Senators and Conſuls. 'Tis therefore a great error for Perſons of Honor, to think they acquire a reverence by putting on a ſupercilious gravity, looking coily and diſdainfully upon all about them; 'tis ſo far from that, that it gives a ſuſpicion that 'tis but a pageantry of greatneſs, ſom muſhrome newly ſprung up, that ſtands ſo ſtiff, and ſwells ſo much. But inſtead of teaching others to keep their diſtance, this faſtidious diſdain invites them to a cloſer inſpection, that if there be any flaw either in their life or birth, 'twill be ſure to be diſcovered, there being no ſuch prying inquiſitor as curioſity, when 'tis egg'd on by a ſenſe of contempt.

3. On the other ſide, if we conſider the effects of Courteſie, they are quite contrary; it endears to all, and often keeps up a Reputation in ſpight of many blemiſhes: a kind look or word from a Superior, is ſtrangely charming, and inſenſibly ſteals away mens hearts from them. This the Wiſeman refers to *Eccluſ.* 18. 16. when he prefers a Word before a Gift. And 'tis *Plutarch*'s obſervation of *Cleomenes* King of *Sparta*, that when

when the Grecians compared his Affability and easiness of Access with the sullen state and pride of other Princes, they were so enamored with it, that they judged him only worthy to be a King. And as there is no certainer, so also no cheaper way of gaining love: a friendly salutation is as easie as a frown or reproch; and that kindness may be preserved by them, which if once forfeited, will not at a far greater price be recovered.

4. Besides, when human vicissitudes are considered, it may be a point of Providence too; the greatest Persons may sometimes want assistance from the meanest; nay sometimes the face of affairs is quite changed, and the wheel of Fortune turns them lowest that were uppermost, and proportionably elevates the meanest. 'Tis wisdom therefore so to treat all, as to leave no impressions of unkindness, since none is so despicable, but may possibly at one time or other have an opportunity to retaliate. 'Twas therefore a prudent as well as an equitable resolution of the Emperor, who said he would so entertain the addresses of his Subjects; as, if he were a Subject, he would wish the Prince should entertain him. A rule very worthy to sway all Persons of Honor in their entercourse with others. And since even among Persons in Command there are degrees, and she which is superior to one, is inferior to another; they have a ready way to compare the civility they pay, with that they expect. Let therefore one who meets with a cold, neglectful

Treatment from any above her, examin her own resentments, and then reflect, that if she give the like to those below her, they will doubtless have the same sense; and therefore let her resolve never to offer what she so much dislikes to bear: and she that does thus, that makes such inferences, will convert an injury into a benefit; civilize her self by the rudeness of others, and make that ill nurture her own discipline.

5. But hitherto we consider Affability only in its ethnic dress, as it is a human ornament; 'twill appear yet more enamoring upon a second view, when we look on it as bearing the impress of the Sanctuary, as a divine Vertu. And that it is capable of being so, we have the autority of St. *Paul*, who inserts it in the number of those Christian Graces which he recommends to his Roman Proselites; *condescend to them of low estate*, Rom. 12. 16. and that we may the better discern its value, 'tis observable that he links it with the most eminent Vertu of Humility; for it immediatly follows his Precept of *be not high minded*. Indeed 'tis not only joined with it as a Friend or Allie, but derived from it as its stock and Principle: and certainly a more divine extraction it cannot have, Humility being the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Vertues, that which laies the foundation, (without which the most towring Structure will but crush it self with its own weight) and that which perfects and consummates the building also, secures and crowns all other Graces; which when they are most verdant

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and flouriſhing, are like *Jonas* his gourd, that may afford ſome ſhadow and refreſhment for a while, but are apt to breed that worm which will deſtroy them. When once they are ſmitten with Pride, they inſtantly fade and wither; ſo neceſſary is humility both for the acquiring and conſerving, all that is good in us.

6. We may therefore conclude, that courteſie and obligingneſs of behavior which proceeds thence, is in reſpect of its ſpring and original, infinitly to be preferr'd before that which deſcends from no higher ſtock then natural or prudential motives; and ſince 'tis natural for every production to have ſome ſimilitude to that which produces it, we ſhall find it no leſs excellent in reſpect of its properties then its deſcent, I ſhall inſtance only in two, Sincerity and Conſtancy.

7. For the firſt as far as Affability partakes of Humility it muſt of Sincerity alſo, that being a vertu whoſe very elements are plainneſs and ſimplicity: for as it has no deſigns which want a cover, ſo it needs none of thoſe ſubtilties and ſimulations, thoſe pretences and artifices requiſite to thoſe that do. Tis the precept of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2. 3. *In lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem others better then himſelf*, where we ſee 'tis the nature of a lowly mind to transfer that eſteem to others which he ſubſtracts from himſelf; now where ſuch an eſteem is planted in the heart, it verifies all the expreſſions and outward ſignifications of reſpect, and renders the greateſt condeſcentions which

(which to an insolent humor may seem extravagant and affected) real and unfeigned.

8. On the contrary that courtesie which derives no higher then from meer human principles, is not much to be confided in. 'Tis the Psalmists affirmation *that all men are liars.* And therefore there is more then a possibility of deceit in their fairest shews. Sometimes we know smooth and plausible addresses have bin designed as the stale to vile and trechetous practices. The extraordinary blandishments and endearing behavior of *Absolom* to the people, was only to *steal their hearts,* and advance his intended rebellion, 2 *Sam.* 15. and *Dawid* tells us of some, *whose words were softer then butter, having war in the heart, whose words were smoother then oil; and yet were very swords,* Psal. 55. 21. and God knows this age has not so much improved in sincerity, that we should think the same Scenes are not daily acted over among us.

9. But besides all the blacker projects of this kind, which nothing but the event can detect, there is a lower sort of this treachery, which is visible, nay so avowed, that it is one of the most common subjects of mirth and entertainment, I mean that of scoffing and derision, a thing too frequent among all; but I fear I may say very peculiarly so among Ladies, those at least of the modish sort, their very civilities and caresses, being often designed to gain matter of scorn and laughter. Mutual visits we know are an expression of respect,

and

and ſhould flow from a real kindneſs, but if thoſe now in uſe be ſifted, how few will be found of that make? They are at the beſt formal, a tribute rather paid to cuſtom then friendſhip, and many go to ſee thoſe, for whom they are perfectly indifferent whether they find them alive or dead, well or ſick. Nay very often they are worſe then thus, deſign'd only to make obſervations, to bolt out ſomthing ridiculous wherewith to ſport themſelves as ſoon as they are gone; and leaſt the inqueſt ſhould return with a *non inventus*, they will accept of the ſlighteſt diſcoveries, the leaſt miſplacing of a word, nay of a hair ſhall be theme enough for a Comedy.

10. But if a poor Country Gentlewoman fall within their circuit, what a ſtock of mirth does ſhe afford them, how curiouſly do they anatomiſe every part of her dreſs, her meen, her dialect, nay perhaps to improve the Scene, will recommend yet greater abſurdities to her, under the notion of the mode, that ſo ſhe may be the more ample ſubject of their ſcorn. Such viſits as theſe are but inſidious intruſions, the inſinuations of a ſpy rather then the good office of a neighbor; and when 'tis remembred how great a portion of ſome womens time is ſpent in this kind of diverſion, we muſt conclude there have a multitude of acts gon to make up the habit. I wiſh they would ſeriouſly reflect on it, and unravel that injurious mirth by a penitential ſadneſs, and either ſpend their time better then in viſiting, or elſe direct their viſits to better

better purposes: and this they would certainly do if they would exchange their meer popular civilities (that kind of paint and varnishing manners for that true Christian condescension, which admits of no deceit, but is as transparent as *Drusus* wisht his house should be, that has no secret fortunes and springs, to move the eyes or tongue a contrary way from the heart, but is in reality all that it pretends to be.

11. A second property of it is Constancy, for as it is true to others, so it is to its self; 'tis founded on the solidest of vertues, and is not subject to those light and giddy uncertainties, that the vulgar civilities are. For he that out of a disesteem of his proper worth, has placed himself in a state of inferiority, will think it not an arbitrary matter, but a just debt to pay a respect to those he thinks his betters; and an humble mind will in every body find something or other to prefer to himself. So that the acts upon a fixt principle, and is not in danger of those contradictions in his manners, which shall render him one day sweet and affable, and another sowre and morose. But such mutations are frequently incident to those who are swaied by other motives, sometimes an interest changes, and then the most fauning Sycophant can transplant his flatteries, and court a new Patron; yea many times to the despight and vilifying of the old.

12. SOMETIMES again, fortune may change; a man may fall from a prosperous to an adverse

verſe ſtate, and then thoſe who were prodigal of their civilities whilſt he needed nothing elſe, will withdraw even thoſe from him, leaſt they ſhould incourage him to demand ſomthing more; an experiment of this *Job* made in his friends (or rather flatterers) whom he fitly compares to winter brooks, running over when not needed, but quite dry when they are.

13. But the moſt frequent change is that of fancy and humor, which has a much more general ſway then reaſon and judgment. This is ſo obſervable in the vulgar rabble, that often in an inſtant they will ſhift paſſions, and hate this hour what they doted on the laſt. Of this all popular ſtates have afforded many coſtly experiments, but we need not go farther then the ſacred Story, where we find the Acclamations and *Hoſannahs* of the multitude, quickly converted into *crucifie him*, *crucifie him*. This levity of mind has bin obſerved ſo incident to women, that 'tis become almoſt proverbial; for by how much their paſſions are more violent, they are commonly the leſs laſting, and as they are reckon'd among thoſe colder bodies that are particularly influenced by the Moon, ſo they ſeem to bear a great reſemblance to her in her viciſſitudes and changes; yet ſtill with a greater degree of uncertainty, for ſhe in all her revolutions obſerves ſome conſtant periods, and we can tell in her wain when ſhe will be at full, ſo that ſhe has a kind of certainty even in her planetary errors; but what Ephemerides can be

framed for ſome womens humors? who can tell how long the preſent will laſt? and what will be the next that will ſucceed?

14. I need not bring inſtances of their inconſtancy from that common place of paſſionate widows, who have let a new love fail even through thoſe flouds of tears wherewith they bewailed the old: for (beſides that that is a caſe wherein poſſibly they may find matter enough for retortion) it is here a little wide from my purpoſe, which deſigns no farther inquiſition then into their ordinary converſation, wherein that love of variety which is ſo remarkable in their habit, their diet, their diverſions, extends it ſelf often to their company, their friendſhips alſo and converſe. Thoſe intimaces which they cheriſht lately, quickly grow deſpicable, and at laſt nauſeous, and conſequently their behavior falls from kind and civil, to cold and diſdainful. I doubt not this often bin proved by many of thoſe humble companions, which officiouſly attend them, who cannot alwaies fix themſelves, no not by thoſe flatteries that firſt introduced them; ſome new comer perhaps has better refined the Art, and do's the ſame thing more acutely and ingeniouſly, and then the old one is to be turned off as too groſs a Sycophant; or if they have bin ſo happy as to light upon ſome of a more generous temper, who inſtead of a ſervile compliance with their humor, and high characters of their worth, entertain them with the true images of themſelves,

and

and endevor to make what others only ſpeak them, this is that unpardonable crime which forfeits all degrees of favor, and does not only avert, but incenſe. A faithfull Monitor is as unacceptable as a true Looking-glaſs to a deformed perſon, which at the beſt will be ſet aſide, and eſcapes well if not broken; and while great perſons diſpence their favors or their frowns by ſuch perverſe meſures as theſe, they will be ſure to do it unjuſtly, as well as unconſtantly.

15. I am far from making this an univerſal charge, I know there are women of the higheſt quality, that guide themſelves by other rules, that are deaf to all the ſongs of *Sirens*, and have the prudence to valu a ſeaſonable reproof before the moſt extravagant Panegyric; but this is owing to that humility which I am now recommending, without which 'tis as impoſſible for greatneſs to be proof againſt flattery, as it is for a Pinnace with ſpreading ſails, and a violent guſt of wind, to ſail ſteddily without ballaſt. And the frequent want of this is it which makes it no leſs frequent to ſee thoſe unevenneſſes and inequalities in behavior; thoſe partialities in diſpenſing even the commoneſt civilities, which I have now repreſented.

16. AND ſure 'tis none of the meaneſt attributes due to that excellent vertu of humility that it can thus fix and poiſe the mind, cure thoſe vertigoes and giddy humors, incident to thoſe who are mounted aloft: and above all that it is a ſure

Antidote againſt the moſt inſinuating poiſon of flattery, a holy ſpel or amulet againſt the venom of a Paraſite, which the Philoſopher juſtly calls the worſt of tame beaſts, as a Detractor is of wild. He being indeed a kind of vulture, in the way of ſeizure, no leſs then ravine, who firſt picks out the eies of that which he deſigns to prey upon; ſuffering not the perſon concern'd, to ſee any thing of that deſtruction which he is to feel. And certainly none of the omincus Birds, no night-Raven or ſcreech-Owle can abode half ſo diſmally as theſe domeſtic Birds of prey, which are not only preſages, but inſtruments of ruine whereſoever they haunt.

17. 'Tis therefore the univerſal concern of thoſe that are great and proſperous, to chaſe them away, as *Abraham* did the Fowles from his Sacrifice, *Gen.* 15. 11. but yet more peculiarly ſo of thoſe to whom fortune has given a ſudden riſe, and unexpected grandeur, they being of all others the moſt obnoxious to this ſort of Harpies. The ſurprizes of proſperity do no leſs diſturb the judgment then thoſe of adverſity: and as one who is in an inſtant ſnatcht up to ſome high Tower, is ſo amazed to ſee himſelf there, that he has no juſt meſure of that altitude, but thinks every thing farther below him then it is: ſo they that aſcend to greatneſs by ſwift and rapid motions, have their heads ſo turned that they are apt to overvalu it; and to look with contempt on thoſe who before perhaps they thought worth their envie. And on a mind thus prepared, flattery may make

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any impreſſions, it ſuborning even Providence as a witneſs on its ſide, and inferring from the Dignities obtained, the tranſcending merit of the obtainer. A piece of Sophiſtry which the ſlighteſt obſerver may eaſily confute, all Ages giving inſtances of thoſe whoſe Vices have preferred them, and by a ſtrange Chimiſtry have extracted Honor out of infamous acts. Yet to a mind poſſeſt with its own admiration, this ſhall paſs for a demonſtration: ſo trecherous a thing is Pride, that it combines with all who deſign to cheat us: and indeed 'tis not only an acceſſary, but the principal; none being in danger by others flatteries, who are not firſt ſeduced by their own.

18. It will therefore be a point of Wiſdom for all Perſons of Honnor to encreaſe their caution with their fortune, and as they multiply their Retinues without, ſo eſpecially to inforce their Guard within, that they become not ſlaves to their own Greatneſs, fix not themſelves in ſuch a poſture of State, as to become immovable to all the offices of Humanity and Civility; nor think that their admiſſion to Greatneſs is upon the ſame terms on which the Jews were wont to receive their Proſelites, that they muſt renounce all their former relations; but to remember that they differ no more from others then as a counter ſet in the place of thouſands or hundreds, does from one ſet in the place of tens or units. A little tranſpoſition may quite alter the caſe; or however, when they are all taken off the ſcore, they

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are then indiſcriminatly tumbled together, and one has no precedence of another, either in place or valu. So undiſcernible will be the difference between the greateſt Queen, and the meaneſt Servant, when Death, that great Leveller, ſhall have mixt them; there will be no inquiſition in the Grave who came embalmed, or perfumed thither. And, as a Learned man ſays, the Ulcers of *Lazarus* will make as good duſt as the Paint of *Jezebel*.

19. BUT I ſhall be thought to have out-run my Subject, or inſtead of that amiable Image of Affability, and univerſal Obligingneſs, the great Ornament of Life, introduce the grim figure of Death, that ſullen Executioner, whom no Gifts, no Praiers can mollifie. Yet I cannot yield it wholly impertinent; for, as its final ſtroke cures all the infirmities of the body, ſo the foreſight and contemplation of it is as much a Catholicon for all the maladies of the mind; eſpecially that of inſolence and diſdain. For ſure they cannot much pride themſelves in any exaltation, that remember they muſt finally fall into the duſt: nor arrogantly deſpiſe others, who conſider that themſelves ſhall one day be inſulted over by worms and inſects. Such mental deſcents into the vault or charnel-houſe, are the beſt diſciplines for the demeanor in other places, according to the admonition of the Wiſe man, *Remember thy end, and thou ſhalt never do amiſs.*

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of Piety.

1. LASTLY, To compleat and crown all other Excellencies, nothing is so proper, so necessary as Piety and Devotion. This is the salt which seasons all Sacrifices; yea, the Altar which sanctifies the Gift, no good (how splendid soever in the sight of man) being acceptable to God, till it be thus consecrated; & have this seal of the Sanctuary upon it. This is a Vertu truly Divine, as well in its original as its end; for as it comes from Heaven, (is an affiation of the blessed Spirit) so it tends thither also, and thither raises its Votaries. This is it which sublimates and spiritualizes Humanity, defecates and refines it from all the dregs of mortality, and so wings our earthly lumpish nature, that we can soar aloft to the region of Spirits, and by its raptures make som essay of that state of separation, even while we are linked to the body. This is it which combines us so with God, that we have the same interests, the same choices; nay it does in a sort communicate and enterchange properties with him; the all Powerful God seems impotent and unable to resist its influence, whilst it invests us feeble wretches in a kind of Omnipotence, by engaging him for us who can do all things.

2. Now

2. Now this Piety may be considered either in a larger, or more limited sense: in the former 'tis as wide as the whole scheme of Duty, not confined to any one act, but extended to all the commands of God. For as the animal Spirit diffuses its self into all the most distant members of the body; so this more vital Principle has as universal an influence on the mind, stamps that with such an admiration and reverence of God, such a love and complacency in him, that every act is (at least habitually) design'd to obey and glorifie him.

3. In the more limited sense, Piety is taken for our more immediate entercourse with God, in things purely divine, as Adorations, Praiers, Aspirations, and all pantings and breathings of the soul after him; and in this notion 'tis more particularly called Devotion. And this is comprehended in the other, as a part in the whole; nay indeed, as an effect in its cause; for where Piety has not first formed and modelled the soul, there can be no true Devotion. External forms of it there may be, but that is but ceremony and pageantry, the most submissive prostrations are there but like that of *Dagon* before the Ark, the fall of a liveless trunk; the most elevated eyes but a kind of convulsive motion; and the most rigid mortifications, but like the cuttings and launcings of *Baal*'s Priests. Of this the very Heathen had som notion, and therefore in their worships had many preparatory ceremonies of lustra-

luſtration, and purifying, as being conſcious of the incongruity, that holy Perſons ſhould be admitted to Sacred things. And accordingly *Socrates* has excellently (I had almoſt ſaid Evangelically) defined, *the beſt way of worſhipping God,* to be *the doing what he commands.* Indeed without this, our devotion is meer ſtratagem and deſign: we invoke God as we uſe to cajole men, only to ſerve a preſent turn; and of ſuch diſingenious addreſſes, 'tis eaſy to read the event, or if we cannot, *Solomon* will inſtruct us, *Prov.* 15. 8. *The Praiers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

4. To treat of the ſeveral branches of Piety in the firſt notion, is not agreable to the intended brevity of this Treatiſe; nor neceſſary, becauſe there are ſo many diſtinct Tracts extant on that Subject; yet I ſhall the more cloſely to adapt it to my female Readers, obſerve the propriety of it to women, not only as it is their greateſt ornament and advantage, but eſpecially as they have ſomwhat more of prediſpoſition towards it in their native temper. God's Laws, which are the rule of Piety, have this common with mens, that they are inforced upon us by the propoſals both of puniſhments and rewards, by that means engaging two of our moſt ſenſible paſſions, Fear and Love; and the female Sex being eminent for the pungency of both theſe, they are conſequently the better prepared for the impreſſions of Religion.

5. THIS is so much acknowledged, that our masculine Atheists make an ill use of it, and are willing to think that Religion owes its force only to the impotence of the subject on which it works, that 'tis only an imposition upon the easy credulity of women, and are content to allow them the inclosure of it; wherein, tho they sufficiently shew their contempt of Piety, yet they unawares give a greater honor to that Sex then they intend, whilst they confess it more capable of an assimilation to the supreme Goodness, and of the renewal of God's Image (for to that all Piety is design'd) then their own. And therefore women have so little reason to be ashamed, that they ought to glory in the concession, and gratefully to celebrate the goodness of God to them, who, as he brings light out of darkness, so converts their natural infirmities into a means of spiritual strength, makes the impotencies and defects of their nature subservient to the operation of Grace; and by consecrating their very Passions, makes even those Gibeonites serviceable to the Tabernacle. But then 'tis to be remembred, that the greater is their obligation to comply with this design of Gods, to let their passions run in the channel he has cut for them; so to confine their Fear and Love to spiritual Objects, that they make no inordinate eruptions to any thing else, but in all their estimations of things dreadful or desireable, to give still the just deference to that which is eternal.

6. AND

6. And, as a Woman in General have this advantage towards Piety, and obligation to it; ſo particularly thoſe of Quality, who we may ſuppoſe to have generally a more early inſtitution and inſtruction in it then thoſe of a meaner rank: and beſides, have afterwards more opportunities of being built up in the knowledg of their duty, and (by the help of an ingenious education) clearer apprehenſions to diſcern it; and when they do ſo, have greater obligations to perform it, both in reſpect of God, of others, and themſelves.

7. In reſpect of God they have the greateſt tie of gratitude, not only for the common mercies which they partake with the reſt of mankind, but for thoſe peculiar, by which they are differenced from others; of which, if they want a juſt valu, let them ask themſelves how willing they would be to part with them, how ſhe that has fed deli.ately, would like to be deſolate in the ſtreet, or *ſhe that has bin brought up in Scarlet, to embrace the Dunghil!*, Lam. 4. 5. and according to the averſion they find to ſuch a change, let them eſtimate their preſent enjoiment, and the thankfulneſs it exacts.

8. Secondly, in regard of others, their Piety backt with their ſecular advantages, may be of a more extenſive benefit; they have many opportunities of doing good by their influence on others; or if no way elſe, yet the ſplendor of their example, will by the eminency of their conditions

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ſhine (as a light on ſom high Tower) more perſpicuouſly, and guide many into the ſame path of Vertu. And certainly 'tis no ſmall obligation that lies on them in this reſpect; for God, who does nothing without an end worthy of his wiſdom, can never be thought to have ſelected ſom perſons as the objects of his bounty, meerly that they may ſwill and glut themſelves with ſenſual pleſures. No doubtleſs, he who is the great Maſter of the Univerſe, diſpoſes all things for common benefit: and therefore, if He have placed ſome in an higher Orb then others, it is that they may have an auſpicious influence on thoſe below them; and if they fail in this, they are no longer Stars but Comets, things of ominous and unlucky abode to all about them. I might enlarge on this Subject, but having don it already in the Gentlemans Calling, I ſuppoſe it unneceſſary, ſince that part is equally adapted to both Sexes.

9. IN the laſt place, they have all obligation to Piety, in reſpect of themſelves, and that in two conſiderations; the firſt, of their preſent danger; the ſecond, of their final account. For their danger, 'tis evident they do not more outnumber their inferiors in any thing then in the opportunities, nay ſollicitations to ſin. Wealth and Honor have many ſnares, and which is worſe, do often diſpoſe the mind to ſuch an heedleſs ſecurity, that it takes no care to avoid them: and as in the body, the diſeaſes of repletion are far more numerous then thoſe of emtineſs, ſo the mind

mind is oftner vitiated by affluence and proſperity, then by indigence and adverſity. It becomes therefore thoſe who are ſo ſurrounded with enemies to fortifie themſelves: and that they can no way do, but by a ſincere Piety, that *whole Armor of God* which the Apoſtle deſcribes, *Eph.* 6. 13. *by which alone they may repel all the darts of temptations*; nay not only ward the blow, but wreſt the weapon out of Satans hand, ſo that when he urges to them the opportunities, the impunity which their wealth and greatneſs gives them to be bad, they may retort his Argument, & by a wholſomer inference collect thence their great obligation to be good, and that not only upon the ſcore of gratitude (tho that were enough to an ingenious ſoul) but in the ſecond place of intereſt alſo, in reſpect of that account they muſt finally give. For tho God be not an unjuſt exactor to reap where he has not ſowed, yet he is not ſo negligently profuſe, as to do that which no prudent man will do, ſcatter his goods promiſcuouſly, without taking notice where they fall; but as he diſpences all things by a particular providence, ſo he does it to a particular end, and will exact as particular an account how that end has bin complied with.

10. IT is a ſmart exprobration of Gods to *Iſrael*, *Ezek.* 16, 17, 18, 19. that ſhe had ſacrilegiouſly emploied his *ſilver and gold*, *his oil*, *his flower and honey which he had given her in the ſervice of her Idols*, by which as we may ſee he takes notice

notice how we diſpoſe of our temporal poſſeſſions, ſo it ſhews us how the enditement will proceed againſt all thoſe who ſo pervert their uſe. With what confuſion muſt they appear at the great Audit who can give no other account of their receits, but that they conſumed them upon their luſts, waged war againſt God with his own treſure, and bin as well thieves as rebels? What a Luciferian fall will they have from their honors, who have endevored to undermine Gods? thought themſelves too great to pay him homage, and by their prophane and vicious example, induced a contemt of him? In ſhort what a retaliation of inverſions will there then be? thoſe that have turned Gods grace into wantonneſs, converted his bounty into the fuel of their pride and luxury, ſhall then have their glory turn'd into ſhame, their riots and exceſſes into the want of a drop of water, and ſhall retain nothing of their greatneſs, but the guilt, the grating remembrance of having abuſed thoſe temporal bleſſings, which if well managed might have received them into everlaſting habitations. How neceſſary then is it for all who have receiv'd ſo much upon account, to be often reflecting on it, examining what charges the great owner has impoſed upon ſo ample an income? what God requires of them for whom he hath don ſo much? And this is particularly the buſineſs of Piety, which in all the forementioned reſpects, is as the uſefulleſt, ſo the nobleſt accompliſhment of greatneſs.

II. And

11. And such it hath bin accounted till this prophane Age of ours, which has removed all the boundaries of the former, reverst even the instincts of nature, and will not leave us so much of Religion as had the very worst of Heathens. For how erroneous soever they were in the choice of their Deities, they alwaies honored and reverenc'd those they chose, committed most of their enormities in obedience not in affront to them: did not assign them votaries as *Jeroboam* did his Priests of the meanest of the people, but thought themselves dignified by their service, and esteemed it an infamy not to be pious. But alas now we adaies make other estimates, Religion is so abject so contemtible a thing, as is thought fit to influence none that are great either in parts or quality: and therefore tho too many are willing to appropriate it to women, upon the first account, *as the Gospel is the foolishness of preaching*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. yet they make exceptions upon the latter, and are not willing to afford it any of the nobler Proselites even of that Sex.

12. I doubt not there are many Lectures read to such, to fortifie them against all impressions of piety, to raise out the common notion of a God, & in order to that to depose his Vicegerent within them, discard their conscience, that unmannerly inmate, which is still speaking what they have no mind to hear, and will be apt sometimes to question their grand principle, and tell them they have

have ſouls. And truly 'tis no wonder if the abetters of Atheiſm take this courſe; for ſince they have no ſolid foundation of truth or reaſon, 'tis but neceſſary they ſupport their Party by Autority, the countenance and applauſe of Great Perſons, and God knows they have too much ſucceeded in the deſign. But, in the mean time, what ſecurity do they give for the truth of their pretenſions? We know 'tis ſtill required of thoſe that will practice upon other peoples concerns, that they put in caution to ſecure the owner from damage. But alas, what gage can they give for a ſoul? Who can contrive a form of Indemnity where that is the thing hazarded.

13. 'Tis eaſy indeed for one of theſe Apoſtles of *Sathan*, to tell a Lady that ſhe has nothing to do but to indulge to her pleſure; that 'tis the extremeſt folly to be frighted from a preſent enjoiment, by a fear of I know not what future ſmart; that God, and Sin, and Hell, are but names, certain Mormos and Bug-bears conjur'd up by Divines, to work upon her fear, and abuſe her credulity. This and much more of this kind may be ſaid, and I doubt often is; but all this while the queſtion is begg'd, and a ſtrong affirmation muſt paſs for proof: for I defie all the Doctors of Atheiſm to make any demonſtration of their Tenet; and yet, though they pretend to no Demonſtration themſelves, Religion muſt be condemned meerly for

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the want of it: that is for not making ſpiritual things liable to ſenſe, for diſtinguiſhing between belief and ſcience; which is indeed for doing the moſt reaſonable thing in the world, *viz.* The remitting every object to the trial of its proper faculty: and they who ſuſpect it on that account, may by the ſame kind of Logic wrangle us out of all our ſenſes, may perſwade us we hear nothing becauſe the eye diſcerns not ſounds, that we taſt not, becauſe the ear underſtands not guſts and ſapors, and ſo on to the reſt.

14. And yet this is the bottom of thoſe Arguments which the great pretenders to Reaſon make againſt Religion, and in the mean time have ſo little ingenuity as to exclaim on the light credulity of fools and women, that embrace the dictates of faith, whilſt the ſame inſtant they exact a more implicit aſſent to their negative Articles, their no Religion. A ſtrange magiſterial confidence ſo to impoſe on this Age, what is ſo univerſally contradictory to all former, and to the common verdict of man-kind. For 'tis obſervable through all the ſucceſſions of men, that there were never any ſociety, any collective body of Atheiſts; a ſingle one perhaps might here and there be found (as we ſometimes ſee monſters or miſhapen births) but for the generality they had always ſuch inſtincts of a Deity, that they never thought they ran far enough from Atheiſm; but rather choſe to multiply their Gods, to have too many

then none at all: nay were apt to descend to the adoration of things below themselves, rather then to renounce the power above them. By which we may see that the notion of a God is the most indelible character of natural reason, and therefore what ever pretence our Atheists make to ratiocination and deep discourse, it is none of that primitive fundamental reason coetaneous with our humanity; but is indeed a reason fit only for those who own themselves like the beasts that perish.

15. BUT admit we could be more bountiful to them, and allow their opinion an equal probability with our Faith, yet even this could never justifie any body in point of prudence, that should adhere to them. Common discretion teaches us that where two propositions have an equal appearance of truth, there is no rational inducement to prefer one before the other, till we have examined the consequences, and find somthing in the one which may over-poise and outweigh the contrary. Now in all things that concern practice, there are no motives so considerable, either to invite or avert, as advantage or danger.

16. LET us apply this to the present case, and examine the pretensions of the Atheist and the Christian in both respects. But first we are to remember, that both advantage and danger are to be viewed under a double notion, either as present or as future. The former is the Atheists most proper subject, and indeed all that he can pertinently

speak

ſpeak to, who profeſſes himſelf only a man of this world. Here he will tell us that the disbelief of God and another life, is the great enfranchiſer of mankind, ſets us at liberty from that thraldom, thoſe Bonds wherewith our ſuperſtitious fears had fetter'd us, that it ſuperſedes all thoſe nice and perplexing inquiries of lawful and unlawful, and reduces all our inquiſitions only to this one, how we ſhall moſt pleaſe our ſelves. The glutton need not put a knife to his throat, but is only to put an edg upon his palate. The drunkard need not refrain his cups, but only take care that they be filled with the moſt delicious liquor. The wanton need not pull out his eye, but only contrive to poſſeſs what that tempts him to deſire; and in a word none of our appetites need be reſtrain'd, but ſatisfied. And this uncontrol'd licentiouſneſs, this brutiſh liberty, is that *ſummum bonum*, that ſupreme happineſs which they propoſe to themſelves, and to which they invite others.

17. On the other ſide the Chriſtian is not without his claim to a preſent advantage, tho of a far differing nature: he is not ſo prepoſterous as to think it a preferment to ſink below his kind; to aſpire to an aſſimulation with meer animals, which is the utmoſt the former amounts to, but he propoſes to himſelf the ſatisfaction of a man; thoſe delights which may entertain his reaſon, not his ſenſe, which conſiſt in the rectitude of a well inform'd mind. His Religion is the perfecteſt ſcheme of Morality, and makes him a Philoſo-

pher without the help of the Schools, it teaches him the art of ſubduing his appetites, calming his paſſions, and in a word makes him Lord of himſelf; and by that gives him all the pleſures which reſult from ſuch a ſoveraignty. Nor is he totally void even of the pleaſures of ſenſe, which in many inſtances are greater to him then to thoſe that moſt court them. Temperance cooks his courſeſt diet to a greater guſt, then all their ſtudied mixtures; chaſtity makes one lawful embrace more grateful to him, then all the nauſeating variety of their unbounded luſts; and contentment ſwells his mite into a talent, makes him richer then the *Indies* would do if he deſired beyond them. Nor is it a contemtible benefit that his moderation gives him an immunity from thoſe ſenſitive pains which oft bring up the rear of inordinate ſenſual pleſures. So that his Condition even ſet in the worſt light in that very particular wherein the Atheiſt moſt triumphs over him, is not ſo deplorable as 'tis repreſented.

18. BUT if it were, he has pleſures that would infinitly overwhelm that ſmart, and that not only in his reaſon (as hath bin ſaid before) but in his more ſublime diviner part, ſuch irradiations from above, ſuch antepaſts of his future bliſs, ſuch acquieſcence in a calm & ſerene conſcience, as is very cheaply bought with all he can ſuffer here. I know the profane laugh at theſe things as Chimera's and the illuſions of a prepoſſeſſed fancy (& truly if they were ſo, they might yet come in balance with many

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of their pleſures which are as much owing to opinion and imagination:) but if we conſider what ſupports they have given under the heavieſt preſſures, how they enabled the primitive Martyrs, not only to ſuffer, but even to court all that is formidable to humane nature, we cannot think that a meer phantaſtic imaginary joy could deceive the ſenſe of ſuch real, ſuch acute torments. And tho in this great declination of zeal, there be perhaps few that can pretend to thoſe higher degrees of ſpiritual raptures, yet certainly were the votes of all devout perſons collected, they would all concur in this teſtimony, that even in the common Offices of Piety, the ordinary diſcharge of a good conſcience, there is an infinitely greater complacence, a higher guſt and reliſh then in all the pleſures of ſenſe. But of this the moſt irrefragable witneſſes are thoſe who from great voluptuaries have turned devotes, and I dare appeal to their experience, whether of the two ſtates is the moſt pleſant. I wiſh thoſe who will not believe this on other words, would themſelves make the trial, and till they do ſo they are notoriouſly unjuſt to pronounce that a fiction, of whoſe reality they refuſe to make proof.

19. BY what hath bin ſaid, ſome eſtimate may be made which bids faireſt (the Atheiſt or Chriſtian) as to preſent temporal felicity: but alas what an allay, what a damp is it to felicity to ſay 'tis temporal, yet we may give it a term below that, and ſay 'tis momentary. For ſince our life is

ſo,

ſo, nothing that depends on that can be other-
wiſe; and yet in this ſhallow bottom the irreli-
ous embark their all. For, as to all future a-
vantage, 'tis their Principle to diſclaim it, the
diſcern *no reward for blameleſs ſouls*, Wiſd. 2. 2
So that in this particular the Chriſtian does n
compare with, but triumph over them. *He kno*
that if his earthly houſe of this Tabernacle be di
ſolved, he hath a building of God; an Houſe n
made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, 2. Cor. 5. 1.
That when he parts with his life, he does not re-
ſign his happineſs, but ſhall receive it infinitly im-
proved both in degree and duration. And no
certainly 'tis viſible enough which opinion pro-
poſes the fairer hopes, and conſequently which
(ſuppoſing but an equal probability of truth) is
the moſt inviting.

20. BUT ſome ſpirits there are ſo ignoble
that the moſt glorious Prize cannot anima
them; that like a ſwine, the muſcles of whol
eies, they ſay, permit him not to look upward
is not concerned in all the felicities above; b
would at a venture reſign his ſhare in thoſe, ſo h
may ſecurely enjoy his huſk and draff. But y
even theſe who are uncapable of the more gen-
rous reſentments, may be apt enough to the mo
ſervile; and danger may fright, tho glory cann
allure them. It concerns ſuch therefore to com-
pare the miſchiefs which each opinion threate
to their oppoſits, and from thence make an eſ-
timate which is ſafeſt to be choſen. And here l
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he Atheist himself cast up the account of the dangers consequent to Christianity, and it can all amount but to this, the deprivation (or rather moderation) of som present sensual plesures, or the incurring of som present sensitive pains; the former in the daily exercise of Temperance, and mortification; the latter, (more rarely and oftner in purpose then act) the suffering for Righteousness sake. And both these the Christian balances, nay out-weighs by two more important present hazards on the other side. To the former, he opposes the danger of being enslaved to the brutish part of a mans self, a thing so deplorable even in the judgment of humanity, that all Writers of Ethics have uniformly declared no servility to be so sordid and intolerable, as that of the vicious man to his Passions and Lusts. To the latter, he confronts the mischeif of being a slave to every man else; for such he certainly is, whom the fear of suffering can baffle out of any thing he thinks just and honest. For if all the men in the World could successively have the power to afflict him, they would also have to command and rule him; and what can be more abject, more below the dignity of humane nature, then to have a spirit alwayes prepared for such a servitude? Besides, even the utmost sufferings which Christianity can at any time require, is outvied daily by the effects of luxury and rage; and for one that has opportunity to be a Martyr for his God, thousands become so to their Vices.

21. IF

21. IF from the present we look forward to future dangers, the Atheist must here be perfectly silent; he cannot say that the Christian after this life shall be in any worse estate then himself, since he concludes they shall both be the same nothing. But the Christian threatens him with a more dismal state, he allows him indeed a being, yea an eternal one; but it is only such as qualifies him for a misery as eternal; the worm that never dies, the fire unquenchable, where all the excesses of his short pleasures shall be revenged with more excessive, endless torments: his senses which were here the only organs of his felicity, shall then be (tho not the only) the very sensible mediums of his wretchedness; and that conscience which he here suspended from its office, shall then take out its arrears, and return all its stifled admonitions in perpetual horrors, and desperate upbraidings. I need not now sure ask on which side the greater danger lies.

22. To conclude, the result of all is, that the transitory pleasures of the Atheist are over-poised even by the present satisfactions of the Pious. And the eternity of unbounded, unconceivable joies he expects hereafter, comes in *ex abundanti* having nothing on the other side that offers at competition with it. And at the very same rate of Propottion we have seen the dangers also are so, that we can easily compute the utmost mischief our Christianity can do us, if it should be false; but the damage of the other is inestimable, both for

for the penalty of loss and sense. I may now appeal to common prudence to judg of the vast inequality, and to pronounce, that sure there had need be som great evidence of truth on the Atheists side, to preponderate all these disadvantages. Indeed nothing much below a demonstration can justify the choice of so dangerous Principles; I am sure an equal probability can never do it, where the danger is so unequal, and were the veriest Atheist consulted in a secular case of the like circumstances, he would certainly pronounce him a mad man that should make such an election. How desperate a phrensy then is it to do it, without so much as that equal probability, nay indeed without any probability at all? And yet this madness sets up for the monopoly not of Wit only, but Reason too; and by confidence and clamor, seeks to run down those Arguments it can never confute.

23. I may be thought here to have made too long a digression from my proper Subject, but I cannot confess it so; for since my present business is to recommend Piety, I can no way do that so effectually as by shewing its consonancy to right reason, especially considering the busie industry is now used to represent it under another form, and to alienate from it those persons whose Greatness may give it any lustre or repute in the World; of which sort I suppose there are few more frequently attaqued then Women of Quality, that converse among those who call

themselves the Wits of the Age; who living in so infectious an air, had need of some antidotes about them; and if what I have now offered, appear not forcible enough, (for it pretends not to the tith of what may be said on the Subject) yet it may at least do them this service, to put them in mind of what they need, and send them to the fuller dispensatories of others.

24. And that is the thing I should earnestly beg of them, that they would be so just to their own interest, as not to combine with seducers against themselves; but if they have been so unhappy as to lend one ear to them, yet at least not to give up both to be forced in a slavish submission to their dictates, but hear what may be said on the other side. And sure 'tis but a low competition for God thus to divide with *Sathan*, yet 'tis that of which his Emissaries are so jealous that 'tis one of their grand Maxims, that none who professes Divinity is to be advised with; and therefore by all Arts they are to be rendred either ridiculous, or suspected; to which methinks may be applied that Fable (which *Demosthenes* once recited to the *Athenians*, when *Alexander* demanded of them to deliver up their Orators) of the Wolves and the Sheep, who coming to a Treaty, the first Article of the Wolves was, that the Sheep should give up their Mastives which guarded them: the resemblance is too obvious to need a minute application.

25 But

25. But this is manifestly to reverse all former Rules, and to trust a man rather in any Faculty then his own, and would never have prevailed in any thing but where the soul is concern'd, that poor despicable thing whereon alone we think fit to make experiments. 'Tis sure, that if any should dispute their title to an earthly Possession, they would not so tamely resign it, nor would trust their own selves in its defence, but would consult their ablest Lawyers, and, by them, sift out every circumstance that might establish their claim. Why should they then suffer themselves to be talk'd out of an Heavenly Inheritance, without so much as once proposing their doubts to those whose study and profession it is to resolve them? But as in all other ills, so in this, prevention is better then cure: and therefore to those that are yet untainted, the securest course will be to stop both ears against all profane insinuations, and to use those who temt them to be disloial to their God, that spiritual adultery, as they should do those who solicit them to the carnal, not so much as to enter parly, but with the greatest indignation detest and reject them. 'Tis the saying of the Wise man, *Prov.* 25. 23. that *an angry countenance driveth away a back-biting tongue.* And certainly, would Great Persons look severely on such defamers of Religion, they would give som check to that impudence of profaneness which has given it such a vogue in the World.

26. And

26. AND sure this is much their Duty to do, if they own any relation to that God who is so dishonored. They would think it a very disingenious thing to sit by to hear a Friend or Benefactor reviled, and express no displesure; and is God so friendless among them, that only his traducers and blasphemers can be patiently heard? Among the Jews, at the hearing of any Blasphemy, they rent their clothes; but I fear we have som of our nice Dames that would be much more concern'd at a rip in their garment, then at the rending and violating God's Sacred Name; and could more patiently behold the total subversion of Religion, then the disorder or misplacing of a lock or riband. But 'tis to be hoped there are not many so impious, and those that are not, will surely think themselves obliged with all their power to discountenance all the Fautors of irreligion, whether they be the solemn sedater sort that would argue, or the jolliter that would rally them out of their Faith.

27. BUT when they have thus provided against the assaults of others, and secured the speculative part of Religion, they have only established a Judicatory against themselves, stored up matter of Conviction and Accusation, if they answer it not in the Practice. I must therefore after this long excursion, return to my first Point, and beseech them seriously to weigh the obligations they have to Piety in the general notion of it, as it comprehends all the duties of a Christian life;

life, of which I intend not to ſpeak particularly; ſo I know not where to find a better ſummary, then that which St. *James* has drawn up, *Chap. 1. verſ. 27. Pure Religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.*

28. BUT beſides this general, there is (as I ſaid before) another more reſtrained notion of Piety, as it relates to our more immediate converſe with God in divine Ordinances and Worſhip, in which reſpect it commonly paſſes under the name of Devotion, and thus conſider'd it has a great propriety to the female ſex. For Devotion is a tender Plant that will ſcarce root in ſtiff or rocky ground, but requires a ſupple gentle ſoil, and therefore the feminine ſoftneſs and pliableneſs is very apt and proper for it. And accordingly there have bin very eminent growths of it in that Sex. I need not heap up examples of former Ages, but rather perſwade this to leave ſome at leaſt to the following; and the more conſiderable the perſons are, the more conſpicuous will be the example, which ſeems the more to adapt it to thoſe I now ſpeak to. Devotion in a Cloiſter is as recluſe as the Votary, a light rather under a buſhel then on a candleſtick: and in an obſcure Cottage 'tis either not obſerved, or elſe thought to be but the effect of deſtitution and ſecular wants, a reſerve rather then a choice: but when thoſe who are in the eie of the world, the moſt eminent Actors on

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the Theater of humane life, ſhall chuſe the part of a Saint, when thoſe who want none of the diverſiſments or blandiſhments of Earth, ſhall have their converſation in Heaven, this recommends it to the Spectators, as the true and greateſt object of humane choice; ſince 'tis choſen by thoſe who know the utmoſt pretence of all its competitors.

29. Nor is devotion only more excellent in them in regard of its effects, but 'tis alſo more neceſſary in reſpect of their obligation. Devotion is an abſtraction from the world, and therefore cannot in any eminent degrees, be practiſed by thoſe whoſe neceſſity or buſineſs do much entangle them in it. So that from ſuch, a far leſs proportion will be accepted, then from thoſe whoſe plenty and eaſe give them no other want but that of emploiment. And certainly if there be any of whom that can truly be ſaid; women of quality are the perſons: for they in this reſpect exceed even men of the like rank, for the men are often engaged in public emploiments, and muſt lend moſt of their time to the uſe of others; or however all have the care of their own private affairs, the managery of their fortunes to employ them. But of women the utmoſt that is ordinarily required, is but a little eaſie inſpection within their own walls, the overſight of a few children and ſervants, and even from this how many are by their condition of life exemted? and how many more do by their niceneſs and delicacy exempt them-

themselves? And surely so perfect a vacancy is neither happy nor safe. And therefore God who projects we should be both, never design'd it for any of mankind: but where he gives so much liberty from secular, he expects a greater diligence in spiritual employments.

30. AND indeed 'tis an amazing thing to see, that any into whom he has breathed the breath of life, on whom he has stamped the image of his own eternity, can think those immortal souls were given them only to serve the mean and abject uses of their corruptible bodies, (for which the soul of the dullest Animal would have don as well;) that eating and drinking, sleep and recreations, which are only useful to the supporting us in this world, are the only things for which we were sent hither. And yet if we may measure their opinions by their practice, this seems to be the perswasion of many of our female Gentry, who look upon it as a degrading, a kind of attainder of their blood, to do any thing but please their senses. An error sure of the most pernicious consequence imaginable. We know a Lady of pleasure is in one sense a very scandalous Epithet, and truly 'tis no very laudable one in the other, nay which is worse, they are often coincident, and fall in with each other. She whose sole universal aim is pleasure, will not think her self much out of her road, in the pursuit of any particular. And she that thinks she lives for no other purpose, will so often be at a loss for innocent pleasure, that she is almost under a necessi-

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ty to call in the nocent, to serve the very end (as she supposes) of her being. But indeed were they sure to confine themselves to such as are harmless in their kind, yet the excess of them renders them sinful, and the doting pursuit denominates them *lovers of Pleasures more then lovers of God*, a character so black that the Apostle compleats his Catalogue of the worst vices of the worst times with it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 4.

31. It is therefore the great goodness of God to design a rescu for those whose condition exposes them to that danger, and by exacting a liberal expence of time in their devotion, divert them from lavishing both it and their souls together. Neither does he by this defeat their aim of a pleasant life, but rather assist it: for whereas sensual delights are vagrant, and must be chased through a hundred turnings and wild Mazes, the spiritual are fixt, and one may know alwayes where to find them. How often are the voluptuous in pain to know which pleasure to choose? like a surfeited stomac the greater variety is set before it, the more it nauseats all. What difficultie hath a Lady many times to resolve whether an afternoon shall be spent at the Court or at the Theater; whether in dancing or at cards, in giving or receiving visits, as not knowing which will best please her? But she that knows the delights of Devotion, knows withal that there is no other fit to come in competition with it, and so is not distracted in her choice, nor need go farther then her Closet for

he moſt agreable entertainment. I know this will ound a little incredible to thoſe that know no o-her uſe of Cloſets then as a conſervatory of gauds nd baubles; that aſpire to no pleſure there a-ove that of children, the playing with the Pi-tures and Popets that adorn it. Nor indeed do I pretend that ſuch ſhall find thoſe ſatisfactions I peak of. Thoſe whoſe errand is to *Beelzebub* the God of flyes, muſt not expect to be treated by the God of *Iſrael*. An ingenious man will ſcorn to obtrude himſelf on thoſe who deſire not his com-pany, and ſure God will not make himſelf more cheap. Thoſe that will meet him in their Cloſets, muſt come with that deſign, reſort thither as to an Oratory; nay more then ſo, they muſt come frequently. Spiritual joies know not the way to a place where they are not often invited: and as men ſeek for each other not in places where they ſel-dom or never come, but where they daily fre-quent; ſo God contrives, not to meet us in that place where we appear rarely and accidentally, but where we uſually reſort.

32. I ſhall not need to branch out devotion in-o the ſeveral parts, that being don already in a multitude of other Treatiſes, of which if they pleaſe to conſult any one, they cannot want a Di-rectory for their worſhip, whether privat or pub-lic. Only let me obſerve the order and connection of thoſe two, that they are neither to be ſever'd, nor yet to be ranged prepoſterouſly. The privat muſt not juſtle out the public, for God expects his

ſolemn homage: and their hudling it up in privat, as it may give men Ground to ſuſpect they pay none at all; ſo neither God nor man can collect any thing better from it, then that they are aſhamed of the Deity they pretend to ſerve. On the other ſide the public muſt as little ſwallow up the privat, and where it does, there may be a juſt doubt of its ſincerity. Many attractives there may be to Church beſides that of Piety, and indeed where that is really the motive, it teaches ſo much reverence to that awful preſence they are to approach, as not to come without ſome preparation. What ſolicitude, what critical niceneſs will a Lady have for her dreſs, when ſhe is to appear at a ſolemn meeting at a Court, and ſhall ſhe take no care how fordidly, how undecently ſhe appears when the King of Knigs gives audience? Shall many hours, days, nay perhaps weeks, be taken up in contriving for the one, and ſhall there never be a minute allotted for the other? This were ſure very unequal, and yet this is the caſe where the devotion of the Cloſet does not prepare for that of the Church. If the mind be not tuned firſt there, yet it will be very ill qualified for that harmony of ſouls, which is the only thing God regards in our public offices. So that were there no other uſe of privat devotion, but as it relates to the public, that were enough to ſpeak the neceſſity of it.

33. BUT indeed 'tis not only a needful preparative to that ſacred commerce, but to our civil.

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The World is but a larger ſort of Peſthouſe, in every corner of it we meet with infectious airs, and thoſe that converſe in it had need of this Antidote. How many temtations does every place, every hour, every interveiw, preſent to the ſhocking even of that moral integrity which a ſober Heathen would judg fit to preſerve; much more of that ſtrict Piety our Chriſtianity exacts.

34. 'Twas the obſervation that *Origen* made of himſelf, that the day in which he ſo ſhamefully fell by ſacrificing to Idols, he had ventured out in the morning before he had compleated his uſual praiers; the Devil finding him ſo unarmed took advantage to aſſault him, as knowing he had then but a ſingle impotent man to wraſtle with, who had forfeited, by not invoking, the protection of God. And indeed ſince praier is the moſt powerful exorciſm to eject him, we may well conclude, the omiſſion of it is a likely means to invite him: for if God have not the prepoſſeſſion, if we do not by hearty praier ſurrender our ſouls to him in the morning, they are then all the day after like that emty houſe mention'd in the Goſpel, a fit receptacle for as many evil ſpirits as pleaſe to inhabit there. Nor are theſe ſpiritual the only dangers that attend us, we are liable to a multitude of ſecular ones alſo: our perſons, our fortunes, our reputations, every thing wherein we can receive a benefit, renders us equally capable of a prejudice. What multitudes of accidents are there to which we lie open, and nothing to guard us

from them but the divine Providence? which if we neglect to ſolicit, we are ſure very unworthy of its defence. And this is a conſideration that methinks ſhould bring even the moſt ſenſual perſons upon their knees: for tho too many may be found that deſpiſe the former danger, and can contentedly enough expoſe their ſouls, yet ſuch are uſually the moſt tender of their temporal concerns, it being commonly the exceſſive love of thoſe which makes them neglect the other. She that fears not the fall into ſin, will yet fear the tumbling into a precipice, and tho ſhe care not for the ſpotting of her innocence, would be very loth any accident ſhould blemiſh her face, diſparage her fame, or impoveriſh her fortune, and yet from any or all of theſe ſhe is utterly unable to guard her ſelf. So that if Piety will not, yet intereſt methinks ſhould render her an homager to that omnipotent power, from whence alone ſhe can derive her ſafety.

35. AND now methinks a Duty that is thus bound on with the cords of a man, with human as well as divine perſwaſives, ſhould not eaſily be ſhaken off. I wiſh I could ſay it never is, but I fear there are ſome of thoſe I now ſpeak to, who neglect it in ſpight of all theſe inducements; who tho they can pretend nothing ſerious enough to own the name of buſineſs, do yet ſuffer a ſucceſſion of I know not what impertinencies to divert them. And indeed were the expence of ſome Ladies daies calculated, we ſhould find every hour ſo full of emtineſs, ſo overladen with vanities that

'tis ſcarce imaginable where an office of Devotion ſhould croud in.

36. The Morning is divided between Sleep and Dreſſing, nor would the morning ſuffice, but that they are fain to make a new computaion to meſure it not by the Sun, but by their time of dining, which is often as late as the ſtationary hours of the Primitive Faſts, tho upon a far differing motive. The afternoons being by this means reduced, are too ſhort for thoſe many divertiſements that await them, and muſt therefore borrow as much of the night as they lent to the morning. And when the meer *fatigue* of pleſures ſend a Lady to her reſt, 'tis not imaginable that ſhe will permit Devotion to induce a yet greater, and more diſagreeable Laſſitude; So that the whole round of her time ſeems to be a kind of *magic* Circle, wherein nothing that is holy muſt appear. And indeed 'tis one of the higheſt Stratagems of *Sathan* thus to foreſtal their time; and by a perpetual ſupply of Diverſions, inſenſibly ſteal from them the opportunities of Divine Offices; an *artifice* by which I preſume he prevails on ſom, who would ſtartle at his groſſer and more apparent Temtations.

37. Nor needs he more than the ſucceſs of this project; for if this *habitual* neglect of Piety ſhould not finally end in great and criminal commiſſions, (as 'tis naturally very apt to do) yet his intereſt is ſufficiently ſecured by ſuch a cuſtomary omiſſion, which amounts to no leſs than the

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living *without God in the World*: a ſtate ſo hopeleſs, that when the Apoſtle recollects to the Epheſians the wrethedneſs of their Gentile State, he does it in thoſe very words, *Eph.* 2. 12. And ſure, thoſe that live ſo under Chriſtianity, are not in a better, but worſe condition, by how much contemt of God is more unpardonable then ignorance.

38. IT therefore infinitly concerns thoſe who are in danger of ſo fatal a ſnare, to look about them, and endevour to countermine *Sathan*, and be as induſtrious to ſecure their duty, as he is to ſupplant it; and to this purpoſe, one of the uſefulleſt expedients I know, is to be aforehand with him; I mean, to make their Devotions the firſt buſineſs of the day; by which I intend not only thoſe Ejaculations wherewith we all ſhould open our eyes, but their more ſet and ſolemn Praiers; a Practice ſo highly expedient to the perſons forementioned, that it falls little ſhort of neceſſary; and that upon ſeveral reaſons.

39. FIRST, in relation to one of the great ends of Morning Praier, which is to ſupplicate the Guidance and protection of God for the whole day. Now if this be not don till ſom Ladies Dreſſings be finiſhed, 'twill be half a mockery, a moſt prepoſterous requeſt, as to the greateſt part of the day, which will be paſt before; and beſides the abſurdity, there is danger in it; for all the preceding time is as it were outlawed by it, put from under the Divine Protection. Alas are

God's

God's ſafeguards to be only meridional, to ſhine out only with the noon-day Sun? Do they ſuppoſe *Sathan* keeps their hours, and ſtirs not abroad till the afternoon, that there is no danger either of corporal or ſpiritual miſchiefs before that time of the day? Certainly, if *the noiſe of the Harp and Viol*, which *Iſa.* mentions, Chap. 5. 12. do not drown it, they may often hear a morning as well as evening Paſſing-bell: with how many others does the glaſs of Life run out, whilſt they are at their Looking-glaſſes? How many bodies are maimed and wounded in the time they are trimming and decking theirs? And *who made them differ from others*, 1 Cor. 4. 7.? Or what tenure have they in the ſafety of one moment, ſave what they owe to God's Providence? And what rational expectation can they have of that, when they do not invoke it?

40. Nor are the ſpiritual dangers leſs, but rather much more; & they muſt be very ſlight obſervers of themſelves, if they do not diſcern that ſnares may be laid for them in their receſſes in their chambers, as well as in places of the moſt public reſort. Indeed, were there no other than what relates to their dreſs, and curioſity thereof, it were enough to evidence their danger; ſcarce any part of that but carrying a temtation in it: to Pride, if it hit right, and pleaſe their fancy: to Anger and Vexation, if it do not. They had need therefore to put on their armor before their ornaments, by a prepoſſeſſion of Praier and Meditation

ditation to ſecure their vitals, leſt by an internal death of Grace, their bodies (in their utmoſt luſter) prove but the painted Sepulcher of their ſouls.

41. IN the ſecond place, this appears requiſit in oppoſition to the indecency and incongruity of the contrary. How inverted an eſtimate do they make of things that poſtpone the intereſts of their ſouls, to the meaneſt member of their bodies, pay a ſuperrogating attendance to the one, before the other comes at all into their care. But what is yet worſe, how vile a contumely is offered to the Majeſty of God, who is uſed as they do their dunning Creditors, poſted off with an excuſe of no leſure yet to ſpeak with him; whilſt in the mean time all the factors for their vanity can have ready acceſs, and full audience. God muſt attend till their Tailor, their Shoomaker pleaſe to diſmiſs them, and at the beſt, can be allowed only to bring up the rear of a whole ſhole of Artificers.

42. BUT thirdly, 'tis very doubtful whether he ſhall obtain ſo much from them; for it may often happen that he ſhall be quite precluded: ſo numerous are the parts of a modiſh equipage, and ſo exact a ſymmetry is required in the whole, that 'tis the buſineſs of many hours to compleat it; when as 'twas ſaid of the Roman Ladies, a counſel muſt be called about the placing of an hair that ſits irregularly, when one thing after another ſhall be tried, and again rejected, as not exact,

act, or not becoming; time all the while insensibly steals away, and tho that will not stay for them, yet dinner doth, and then their Bellies begin to murmur to pay any longer attendance on their backs, and claim the next turn; and between these two competitors, 'tis odds Devotion will be quite excluded, or reduced only to a grace before meat: (and well if that, considering how unfashionable even that is grown) in the mean time, what a wretched improvidence is it, to reduce the one necessary business of the day to such uncertainties, nay almost to a certain disappointment.

43. Yet suppose this hazard were only imaginary, and a Lady were iufallibly sure not to lose the time for her Praiers; yet in the *Fourth* place, she will be likely by such preceding diversions to lose much of her zeal in them, so that if they be said at all, they will scarce be said in a due manner. There is alas such a repugnancy in our nature to any thing spiritual, that we cannot close in an instant; but as a benummed, frozen body will need som rubbing and chafing before it can be fit for motion; so our more frozen Souls require som previous incitations before they can with any vigor *exert* themselves in Devotion. Now sure the dressing time (I mean such a dressing as we now suppose) is not very proper for such preparations. 'Tis, on the contary, extreme apt to indispose and unfit them; for when the fancy is possest with so many little images of va-

nity, they will not eaſily be ejected. That ranging faculty is, God knows, too apt to bring in even the remoteſt diverſions; but when it hath ſuch a ſtock ready at hand, how will it pour them in upon the mind, to the great allaying, if not utter extinguiſhing of Devotion.

44. When all theſe conſiderations are put together, 'twill ſure appear wholſom counſel, that ſuch perſons ſhould not truſt ſo important a Duty to ſo many Caſualties, but in the firſt place ſecure a time for that, repair to their Oratory before their dreſſing room, and by an early conſecration of themſelves to God, defeat *Sathan*'s claim, and diſcourage his attemts for the reſt of the day. We know there is a natural efficacy in a good beginning, towards the producing a good ending: But in ſpiritual things the influence is yet greater, becauſe it draws in Auxiliaries from above, and engages the yet farther aſſiſtances of Grace. Upon which account I am apt to believe, that where this Duty is ſincerely and fervently performed in the morning, it will not totally be neglected in the ſucceeding parts of the day. 'Twill be eaſy to diſcern the ſame obligation, the ſame advantage of cloſing the day with God, that there was to begin it; and when thoſe *two* boundaries are ſecured, when thoſe are lookt upon as ſtrict duty, and conſtantly obſerved, 'tis not unlikely but their Piety may grow generous, and with *David*, *Pſal.*55.17. add to the *evening and morning a noon-day office*; for where Devotion is real,

real, 'tis apt to be progreſſive; and the more we converſe with God, the more we ſhall deſire to do ſo. Thus we ſee how this little cloud like that of *Elijah*, 1 *King.* 18. 44. may *over-ſpread the Heavens*, and this handful of firſt-fruits may hallow the whole day.

45. NAY indeed, when it has advanced thus far, 'twill probably go farther, 'twill not keep it ſelf only on the defenſive part, but invade its oppoſits, get daily ground of thoſe vanities by which it was before oppreſt. For when a Lady has in her Cloſet waſht her cheeks with penitential tears, ſhe cannot ſure when ſhe comes out think them prepared for the varniſh of the paint and fucus. When ſhe has attentively examined her Conſcience, that impartial mirror, and there diſcern'd all the blemiſhes of her nobler part, ſhe will ſure with ſomwhat a more cold concern conſult her looking-glaſs. And when ſhe has by pious Vows and Reſolutions *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom* 13. 14. 'twill be impoſſible for her to be very anxiouſly careful about her garments. This devout temper of her mind will by a holy *leger-demain* ſhuffle the Romances out of her hand, and ſubſtitute the Oracles of Truth; will not let her dream away her time in phantaſtic Scenes, and elaborate nothing, but promt her *to give all diligence to make her Calling and Election ſure.* In a word, when ſhe once underſtands what it is to ſpend one hour devoutly, ſhe will endever to reſcue all the reſt from trifles, and impertinent en-

tertainments; and employ them to purpoſes more worthy the great end of her being. Thus may ſhe almoſt inſenſibly wind her ſelf out of the ſnare, diſintangle herſelf from thoſe temtations wherewith ſhe was enwrapt; and by having her *heart ſo ſet at liberty, may run the waies of God's Commandements, Pſ.* 119.

46. BUT Privat Devotion, tho of excellent effect, cannot commute for the omiſſion of public, nor indeed can it long maintain its vigor, unleſs ſomtimes cheriſhed by the warmth of Chriſtian Aſſemblies; and if God pleaſe to viſit them in their Cloſets, they are (even by their own Laws of civility) obliged to return his Viſits, and attend him in his houſe. I fear too many adapt the inſtance in the formality too, and come as unconcernedly to him as they do to one another. 'Tis true, thoſe that pay him a cordial reverence at home, will certainly do it at the Church; and therefore by the little we ſee performed by ſom there, we may doubt God ſees as little in their Retirements. But what ſpeak I of an hearty Reverence, when 'tis viſible that there are thoſe who pay none at all? How rare a ſight is it for ſom Ladies to appear at Church? How many times (I had almoſt ſaid hundreds) do we ſee their Coaches ſtand at the Play-houſe, for once at God's? They ſeem to own no diſtinction of daies unleſs it be, that Sunday is their moſt vacant ſeaſon to take Phyſic, or to lie a-bed; and if ſuch do ever come to Church, Devotion is like

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to be the leaſt part of their errand; ſome new garment perhaps or dreſs is to be ſhew'd, and that thought the place where the moſt critical Judges of thoſe things will be moſt at leſure to obſerve them; or if they come not to teach new faſhions, it may be they come to learn; and ſuch Documents will be ſurer to be put in practice than any in the Sermon. Poſſibly they expect to ſee ſome friend or acquaintanc there, and as if Chriſt were to be ſerved (as he was born) in an Inn, make his Houſe the common rendezvouz in which to meet their Aſſociates. If they have any more ingenious attractives, 'tis commonly that of curioſity, to hear ſome new celebrated Preacher, and that rather for his Rhetoric than his Divinity; and this Motive (tho the beſt of the ſet) is but like that which prevail'd with thoſe *Jews* St. *John* mentions, who came to *Jeſus that they might ſee Lazarus*, Jo. 12.

47. I ſhall not rank among theſe motives, that of Hypocriſie and ſeeming Holineſs, for from that all the reſt do acquit them. Indeed 'tis the only ſin which this Age hath ſeemed to reform, and that too only by way of *Antiperiſtaſis*, not by the Vertu but the Iniquity of the Times. Religion is grown ſo unfaſhionable, ſo contemtible; that none can now be temted to put on ſo ridiculous a diſguiſe. And altho as to ſingle perſons I confeſs Hypocriſie one of the deepeſt Guilts, ſuch as has a peculiar portion aſſign'd it by Chriſt in the place of torment, *Mat.* 24. 51. yet as to Communities,

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I cannot but think it better to have a face of Religion then Profaneneſs. The example of the former may work beyond it ſelf, and the form of Godlineſs in ſom may produce the power of it in others; but a pattern of Profaneneſs, the farther it operates, the worſe; and all the progreſs it can make, is from one wickedneſs to another: ſo that I fear as St. *Bernard* wiſht for his Beaver again, ſo the Church may ere long for her Hypocrites.

48. BUT to recal my ſelf from this digreſſion, let us a little enquire how thoſe whom the forementiond Motives bring to Church behave themſelves there, and that is indeed with great conformity to the ends of their coming, their errand is not to be Suppliants, neither do they put themſelves in the poſture, kneeling is impertinent for them who mean not to pray, but as the Apoſtle deſcribes the Idolatrous ſervice of the *Iſraelites*, *They ſat down to eat, and drink, and roſe up to play*; ſo theſe ſit down to talk and laugh with their Pew-fellows, and riſe up to gape and look about them. When they ſhould be confeſſing their ſins to Almighty God, they are apologiſing (perhaps) to one another for the omiſſion of a ceremonious viſit, or ſome other breach of civility; when they ſhould be *obſerving the goings of God in the Sanctuary*, Pſal. 68. They are inquiring when this Lady came to Town, or when that goes out; nay perhaps the Theater is brought into the Temple the laſt Play they ſaw is recollected, and Quotations enough brought thence to vie with the Preacher,

Preacher. 'Tis impoſſible to reckon up all their *Topics* of Diſcourſe, nay it were indeed ſcandalous for one that reproves them to pretend to know, by how many impertinencies (to ſay no worſe) they profane that holy Place and Time.

49. But that all-ſeeing eye in whoſe preſence they are, keeps an exact account, and will charge them not only with the principal but the product; not only with their own Irreverences, but with thoſe which by their example or encouragement they have occaſion'd in others, nay farther even with that ſcandal which redounds to Chriſtianity by it. For when one that is to chooſe a Religion, ſhall read the Precepts of *Pythagoras* enjoining that the Gods muſt not be worſhipt in paſſing by, as it were accidentally, but with the greateſt ſolemnity and intention: When they ſhall conſider the care of *Numa* in inſtituting Officers, who at Sacrifices, and all divine Services ſhould call upon the People to keep ſilence, and *advert* to Devotion; or but the practice of the preſent *Mahometans*, who permit none to ſit in their *Moſches*, nor to pray without Proſtration. When, I ſay, this is conſidered, and compar'd with the ſcandalous indecency obſervable in our Churches, he will certainly exclude Chriſtianity from all competition in his choice; not allow that the name of a Religion, whoſe very Worſhip appears ſo profane, and whoſe Votaries mock the God they pretend to ſerve.

50. Yet

YET how ſevere ſoever the charge may lie againſt ſome, I am far from including all under it. I know there are many Ladies whoſe examples are reproches to the other Sex, that help to fill our Congregations, when Gentlemen deſert them, and to whom ſometimes we alone owe that our Churches are not furniſhed like the Feaſt in the Parable, *Luk.* 14. 21. meerly out out of *the high waies and hedges, with the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind*; yet ſome even of theſe may be liable to ſome irregularity, which may be the effects of inadvertence or miſperſwaſion, tho not of contemt or profaneneſs.

51. AND firſt 'tis obſervable in ſome who come conſtantly, that yet they come not early, ſo that a conſiderable part of Praiers is paſt ere they enter the Church. This firſt cauſes ſome diſturbance to others, the ſucceſſive entry of new comers keeping the Congregation in a continual motion and agitation; which how unagreable it is to Devotion, *Numa* a Heathen Prince may teach us, who *Plutarch* tells us took a particular care, that in the time of divine Worſhip, no knocking, clapping, or other noiſe ſhould be heard; as well knowing how much the operations of the Intellect are obſtructed by any thing that importunes the Senſes. What would he have ſaid, ſhould he come into one of our City-Congregations, where often during the whole time of Praier, the clapping of Pew-doors doth outnoiſe the Reader.

52. BUT beſides the indecency of the thing, and

and the interruption it gives to others, 'tis very injurious to themſelves; a kind of partial excommunication of their own inflicting, which excludes them from part of the divine Offices, and from that part too, which is of the moſt univerſal concern: I mean the confeſſion of ſins, which the wiſdom of our Church has fitly placed in the begining of her Service, as the neceſſary introduction to all the reſt. For conſidering how obnoxious we all are to the wrath and vengeance of God, our firſt buſineſs is to deprecate that, by an humble confeſſion of our guilt. Would any Malefactor that had forfeited his life to Juſtice, come boldly to his Prince; and without taking notice of his crimes, importune him to beſtow the greateſt favours and dignities upon him? Yet 'tis the very ſame abrupt impudence in us, to ſupplicate the divine Majeſty before we attempt to attone him; to ask good things from him before we have acknowledged the ill we have done againſt him. And to ſuch God may juſtly make ſuch a return as *Auguſtus* did to one that had entertained him much below his greatneſs, I knew not before that we were ſuch familiars.

53. It will much better become them to anticipate the time, *to wait at the poſts of his doors*, *Prov.* 8. and contrive to be there before the Service begins, that ſo by previous recollection they may put their minds in a fit poſture of addreſs at the publick Audience: which (by the way) ſpeaks it to be no very laudable cuſtom which al-

moſt univerſally prevails, that thoſe few who do come early, ſpend the interval before ſervice, in talking with one another, by which they do not only loſe the advantage of that time for preparation, but convert it into the direct contrary, do thereby actually unfit and indiſpoſe themſelves. God knows our hearts even in their moſt compoſed temper, are too apt to create diverſions; we need not ſtart game for them to chaſe, and by prefacing our Prayer with ſecular diſcourſe, make a gap for the ſame thoughts to return upon us in them. Beſides in relation to the place, it has a ſpice of profaneſs, 'tis the bringing the Moabite and Ammonite into the Temple, *Deut.* 23. 3: a kind of invaſion on Gods propriety, by introducing our worldly concerns or divertiſments into the houſe which is called by his name, ſolemnly dedicated to him, and therefore dedicated that it might be his peculiar. So that with a little variation, we may to ſuch apply the expoſtulatory reproof of the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 22. *What, have you not houſes to talk and converſe in, or deſpiſe ye the Church of God?* But this is I confeſs a reproof that will not reach to many, there being ſo few of the better ſort that come early enough to talk before Service; and as for thoſe who talk at it, we have already rankt them under another *Claſſis*. Yet give me leave to add that thoſe fall not much ſhort of that degree of profaneneſs, who come late, only becauſe they are loath to riſe, or to abate any thing of the curioſi-

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ty of their dreſs. For ſhe that prefers her ſloath or her vanity before Gods Service; is like (how decently ſoever ſhe behave her ſelf) to give but an unſignificant attendance at it.

54. But I gueſs this may in many proceed from another cauſe, which though leſs ill in their intention, is not ſo in reſpect either of its unreaſonableneſs or its effects; and that is an unequal eſtimate they make of the parts of Gods Service. This laſt Age has brought in ſuch a partiallity for Preaching, that Prayer ſeems comparatively (like *Sarah* to *Hagar*) deſpicable in their eyes: ſo that if they can but come time enough to the Sermon, they think they have diſcharged the weightier part of the Law, and of their own duty. This miſperſuaſion, though it have too generally diffuſed it ſelf through both Sexes, yet ſeems to have been very eſpecially imbibed by the female. And beſids the evidence that Sunday gives; the week-days afford no leſs. Let there be a Lecture though at the remoteſt part of the Town, what hurrying is there to it; but let the Bell tole never ſo loud for the Canonical hours of Common Prayer, 'twill not call the neareſt of the Neighbour-hood. I ſpeak not of thoſe who are at defiance with our Service, and have liſted themſelves in ſeparate Congregations (for I intend not to trace them through their wild mazes) but of thoſe who yet own our Church, and object not to its Offices; but only have ſuffered their value for them to be inſenſibly undermined by their greater zeal for Preaching.

God ſure intends a Harmony in all ſacred Ordinances, and would not have ſet up a party againſt another, but mutually aſſiſt each others operation upon us: thus Prayer diſpoſes us to receive benefit by Preaching, and Preaching teaches us how to Pray aright; and God grant we may long enjoy the publick opportunities of both. Yet ſince this Age hath brought them to a competition, I muſt take leave to ſay, that if we come impartially to weigh Prayer and Preaching, the Ballance will incline another way then it ſeems with many to do; and we ſhall find Prayer the more eſſential part of Religion.

55. The end of Preaching is twofold, either to teach us what we know not, or to excite us to practice what we already know: now in relation to the firſt of theſe ends, I ſuppoſe there is a wide difference between Preaching at the firſt promulgation of the Goſpel, and now: 'twas then the only way of revealing to the World the whole myſtery of our Salvation; ſo that the Apoſtles inference was then irrefragable, *How ſhall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher?* Rom. 10. 14. But where Chriſtianity is planted, and the New Teſtament received, we have therein the whole doctrine of Chriſt; nay we have not only the matter but the very form of many of thoſe Sermons which Chriſt and his Apoſtles Preached; ſo that unleſs we think them not ſufficiently gifted, we cannot but acknowledg we have in them ample in-

inſtruction, both for Faith and Manners; enough, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, to *make us wiſe unto Salvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. And the reading of thoſe being a conſiderable part of our Churches Service, we have the moſt genuine Preaching even before the Miniſter aſcends the Pulpit. Beſides, for the help of thoſe whoſe youth or incapacity diſables them from making collections thence for themſelves, our Church has epitomiz'd the moſt neceſſary Points of Belief and Practice in the Catechiſm, not (as the Roman) to preclude their farther ſearch, but to ſupply them in the interim till they are qualified for it; and by that early infuſion of Chriſtian Principles, to ſecure them of that knowledge which is ſimply neceſſary to their Salvation.

56. Now ſure, to people in this ſtate, Preaching is not of ſo abſolute neceſſity, in reſpect of inſtruction, as it was to thoſe who from Heatheniſm and Idolatry were to be brought, firſt to the Knowledge, and then to the Faith of Chriſt. We ſeem therefore now more generally concern'd in the other end of Preaching, the exciting us to Practice; for alas, there are few of us who ſtumble on ſin for want of light, but either through heedleſneſs, and want of looking before us, or elſe by a wilful proſtration of our ſelves to it; ſo that we often need to be rouſed out of our negligence, to be frighted out of our ſtubbornneſs, and by a cloſe application of thoſe truths we either forget or ſuppreſs, be animated to our Duty. And

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for this purpoſe Preaching is doubtleſs of excellent uſe, and the nauſeating of it ſhews a very ſick conſtitution of mind; yet ſure the over-greedy deſire may be a Diſeaſe alſo. He that eats more than he can concoct, do's not ſo much aſſiſt as oppreſs nature; and thoſe that run from Sermon to Sermon, that allow themſelves no time to chew, much leſs to digeſt what they hear, will ſooner confound their brains then better their lives. Nay, it oft betraies them to a very pernicious deluſion, it diverts them from many of the practical parts of Piety, and yet gives them a confidence that they are extraordinarily Pious; and by their belief that Religion conſiſts principally in hearing, makes them forget to try themſelves by that more infallible teſt of doing God's will. So that whereas God never deſign'd Preaching for more then a guide in their way, they make it their way, and their end too; and Hearing muſt, like a Circle, begin and terminate in it ſelf.

57. I am ſure in ſecular concerns, we ſhould think him a very unprofitable ſervant, that after his Lord had given him directions what to do, ſhould be ſo tranſported with hearing his inſtructions, that he ſhould deſire to have it infinitely repeated, and ſo ſpend the time wherein he ſhould do the work. And we have reaſon to think, God will make the ſame judgment of thoſe who do the like in his ſervice.

58. One would now think that this ravenous appetite of hearing ſhould ſuperſede all niceneſs in

init, yet we find it does not, but that ſome make a ſhift to be at once voracious and ſquemiſh. If this ſpiritual food be not artificially dreſt, 'tis too groſs for their palats; the Phraſe muſt be elegant, the words well accented, and the *inticing words of mans wiſdom* which St. *Paul* diſclaims in his Preaching, 1 *Cor.* 2.4. is that which they principally regard. Nay the memory of the Preacher becomes the moſt material Point of his Sermon, and the firſt glance on his Book pre-judges him. I need not add the extravagances of an uncouth tone, a furious vehemence, or phantaſtick geſture, wherein the ſoul and vital efficacy of Preaching has been ſolemnly placed. Now 'tis evident all theſe are but trivial Accompliſhments; ſo that thoſe who inſiſt ſo much on them, do make Preaching much leſs Sacred and Divine then indeed it is; and therefore cannot without abſurdity lay the main ſtreſs of Religion upon it; or make that the higheſt of Gods Ordinances, which owes all its gratefulneſs with them to the Endowments of men. Some may think I purſue this ſubject too far, but I am ſure I do it not with deſign to derogate from the juſt reſpect due to Preaching; only I would not have it monopolize our eſteem, or juſtle out another Duty, which is of more conſtant uſe, and indiſpenſible neceſſity.

59. And ſuch certainly is Prayer, that reſpiration of the ſoul, which is ſo neceſſary, that it admits not of long intermiſſions, and therefore ſeems to carry the ſame proportion to hearing, which breath-

breathing does to eating: we may make long intervals of feeding, and yet ſubſiſt; but if we ſhould do ſo in breathing, we cannot recover it. Prayer is like the morning and evening Sacrifice under the Law, which God ordained ſhould be perpetual; whereas Preaching is but like the Readings in the Synagogues on Sabbaths and Feſtivals. Indeed, however we have confounded the terms, 'tis Prayer only that can properly be called the worſhip of God; 'tis that by which we pay him his ſolemn homage, acknowledge his ſovereignty, and our own dependence. When we hear, we do no more then what every Diſciple does to his Maſter; but when we pray, we own him as the ſpring and ſource of all the good we expect; as the Author of our Being, and the Object of our Adoration: in a word, we do by it profeſs him our God; it being an impreſs of meer natural Religion to ſupplicate the Deity we acknowledge.

60. And as by Prayer we render the greateſt Honour to God, ſo likewiſe do we procure the greateſt advantages to our ſelves. Prayer is the powerful Engin, by which we draw down Bleſſings; 'tis the key which lets us into the immenſe Store-houſe of the Almighty; nay 'tis that upon which the Efficacy of Preaching depends. The Word is but a dead letter without the Spirit; and God has promiſed the Spirit to none but thoſe that ask it, *Luk.* 11. 13. So that Prayer is that which enlivens and inſpirits our moſt ſacred actions:

ons: and accordingly in Scripture we find it ſtill a concomitant in all Eccleſiaſtical concerns. When an Apoſtle was to be ſubſtituted in the room of *Judas*, we find they refered it not to the deciſion of lots, till God, who had the ſole diſpoſing of them, *Prov.* 16.33. had been invoked by ſolemn Prayer, *Act.* 1. 24. So when *Barnabas* and *Saul* were to be ſeparated to the Miniſtry, though the appointment were by the Holy Ghoſt, yet that ſuperſeded not the neceſſity of Prayer; the Apoſtles Prayed, (yea, and faſted too) before they laid their hand on them, *Act.* 13.3. Nay, our Bleſſed Saviour Himſelf, though He knew what was in man, and needed no guidance but his own Omniſcience in his choice: yet we find that before his Election of the twelve Apoſtles, he continued a whole night in Prayer to God, *Luk.* 6. 12. doubtleſs, to teach us how requiſite Prayer is in all our important intereſts, which like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire to the Iſraelites, is our beſt Convoy through the Wilderneſs, through all the ſnares and temptations, through all the calamities and diſtreſſes of this World, and our moſt infallible Guide to the Land of Promiſe.

61. And ſure when all theſe are the properties of Prayer, though private, they will not leſs belong to the publick; ſuch a conſpiration and union of importunate Devotion muſt have a proportionable increaſe in its effect; and if Heaven can ſuffer violence by the fervour of one ſingle Votary,

with what ſtorms, what batteries will it be ſcaled by a numerous Congregation? We find the Church is, by Chriſt, compared to *an Army with banners*, *Cant.* 6. 3. but ſure never is this Army in ſo good array, in ſo invincible a poſture as upon its knees. The Eccleſiaſtical ſtory tells us of a Legion of Chriſtians in *Aurelius*'s Camp, who in that poſture diſcomfited two aſſailants at once, the enemy and the draught; that breath which they ſent up in Prayers, like a kindly exhalation return'd in rain, and relieved the periſhing Army: and had we but the ſame fervour, and the ſame innocency, could we lift up but as pure hands as they did, there would be no Bleſſing beyond our reach. But the leſs any of us find our ſelves ſo qualified, the more need we have to put our ſelves among thoſe that are.

62. There is an happy contagion in goodneſs, like green wood; we may perhaps be kindled by the neighbouring flame; the example of anothers zeal may awake mine. However, there is ſome advantage in being in the company: the ſhowers of benediction which their Prayers bring down, are ſo plentiful, that ſome drops at leaſt may ſcatter upon thoſe about them. We find *Eliſha* for *Jehoſhaphat*'s ſake, endured the preſence of *Jehoram*, whom otherwiſe he profeſſes he would not have lookt towards, 2 *King.* 3. 14. and God may perhaps do the like in this caſe; and as he proſpered *Potiphar* for *Joſeph*'s ſake, *Gen.* 39. 2,

ſo the Piety of ſome few may redound to the benefit of all. From all theſe conſiderations I ſuppoſe may ſufficiently be evinced the neceſſity and benefit, of publick Prayer, and conſequently the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe, who upon any pretence neglect it. I ſhall now only beſeech thoſe to whom I ſpeak to make the application to themſelves, and to ſhew they do ſo by their more early and more aſſiduous attendance on it.

63. There is alſo another Duty to which many of theſe to whom I write ſeem to need ſome incitation, and that is Communicating; a part of Devotion which the looſer ſort ſcarce ever think in ſeaſon till their death beds; as if that Sacrament, like the Romaniſts Extream Unction, were only fit for expiring ſouls; but to ſuch we may apply the words of the Angel to the woman, *Luke* 24. 5. *Why ſeek ye the living among the dead?* Why think ye that the Sun of Righteouſneſs is only to ſhine in the ſhades of death, or that Chriſt is never to give us his fleſh, till we are putting off our own. 'Tis one principal end of that Sacrament to engage and enable us to a new life; how preposterous then is it, how utterly inconſiſtent with that end to defer it to the hour of death. 'Tis true 'tis a good *Viaticum* for ſuch as are in their way towards bliſs, but it is too bold a hope, to fancy that it ſhall in an inſtant bring them into that way, who have their whole life poſted on in the contrary; the roads to Heaven and Hell lie

ſure too far aſunder to be within diſtance of one ſtep; nor can it with any ſafety be preſumed that once receiving at their death, ſhall expiate ſo many wilful neglects of it in their life.

64. But I ſhall ſuppoſe theſe total Omiſſions are not a common guilt: yet with many others the fault differs only in degree, they do not wholly omit, but yet come ſo in frequently, as if they thought it a very arbitrary matter whether they come or no. And this truly is obſervable in many who ſeem to give good attendance on other parts of Divine Worſhip; for indeed 'tis a ſad ſpectacle to ſee; that let a Church be never ſo much crouded at Sermon, 'tis emptied in an inſtant when the Communion begins; people run as it were frighted from it, as if they thought with thoſe in *Malachy*, that *the table of our Lord is polluted*, Mal. 1. 12. that ſome peſt or infection would thence break forth upon them. A ſtrange indignity to the Majeſty, and ingratitude to the love of our Redeemer. Let a King, or but ſome great man make a publick entertainment, how hard is it to keep back the preſſing multitude: many Officers are neceſſary to repel the uninvited gueſts, and yet here there needs more to drive us to it, though the invitation be more general, and the Treat infinitely more magnificent.

65. I know this fault (like many other) ſhrouds it ſelf under a fair diſguiſe, and this barbarous neglect pretends to the humbleſt veneration,

tion. People ſay 'tis their great reverence they have for the Sacrament that keeps them at ſo great a diſtance; but ſure that is but a fictitious reverence which diſcards obedience; and when Chriſt commands our coming, our drawing back looks more like ſtubborneſs and rebellion, then awe and reſpect. I ſuppoſe we pretend not to exceed the Primitive Chriſtians in humility and godly fear, and yet they communicated daily; and therefore ſure our reverence is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce ſuch contrary effects. Indeed 'tis to be feared that many put a great cheat upon themſelves in this matter. The Euchariſt is juſtly accounted the higheſt of divine Ordinances, and thoſe who think of no preparation in other, yet have ſome general impreſſions of the neceſſity of it in this; but the uneaſineſs of the task diſcourages them, they dare not come without a wedding garment, and yet are loath to be at the pains to put it on, ſo that all this goodly pretext of reverence, is but the Devil in *Samuels* Mantle, is but ſloath clad in the habit of humility.

66. And to this temptation of ſloath, there is another thing very ſubſervient, and that is the eaſie and ſlight opinion which is commonly taken of ſins of Omiſſion; many are ſtartled at great Commiſſions, think them to carry a face of deformity and horror, who in the mean time look on Omiſſions only as privations and meer nothings, as

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if all the affirmative Precepts were only things of form, put in by God rather to try our inclinations, then to oblige our performance; and so were rather overtures and propoſals which we may aſſent to or not, then injunctions which at our peril we muſt obey. A fancy no leſs abſurd then impious. That God ſhould be content ſo to compound with his creatures (and like a Prince overpowr'd by his vaſſals) conſent to remit all their homage, abſolve them from all poſitive Duty, ſo they would be but ſo civil as not to flie in his face, or to commit outrage on his Perſon. But this wild imagination needs no other confutation, then that form of Indictment our Saviour gives us as the Model of that which ſhall be uſed at the laſt day, *Mat.* 25. where the whole Proceſs lies againſt ſins of Omiſſion, and yet the ſentence is as diſmal and irreverſible, as if all the Commiſſions in the World had been put into the Bill.

67. And certainly of all Omiſſions none is like to be more ſeverely charged then this of communicating, which is not only a diſobedience, but an unkindneſs, which ſtrikes not only at the Authority, but the Love of our Lord, when he ſo affects a union with us that he creates Myſteries only to effect it, when he deſcends even to our ſenſuality; and becauſe we want ſpiritual appetites, puts himſelf within reach of our natural, and as he once vail'd his Divinity in fleſh: ſo now vails even that fleſh under the form of our corporal

poral nouriſhment, only that he may the more indiſſolvably unite, yea incorporate himſelf with us. When I ſay he does all this, we are not only impious but inhumane if it will not attract us. Nay farther, when he does all this upon the moſt endearing memory of what he has before done for us, when he preſents himſelf to our embraces in the ſame form wherein he preſented himſelf to God for our expiation, when he ſhews us thoſe wounds which our iniquities made, thoſe ſtripes by which we were healed, that death by which we are revived, ſhall we to compleat the Scene of his Paſſion, force him alſo to that pathetick complaint, *Lam.* 1. 12. *Have ye no regard all ye that paſs by?* Shall we inſtead of ſmiting our breaſts (as did other witneſſes of his ſufferings) turn our backs? If we can habitually do this, 'tis to be feared the next degree will be to wag our heads too, and we ſhall have the profaneneſs to deride, what we have not the Piety to commemorate.

68. And this ſeems to be no improbable fear, for in Religion there are gradual declinations as well as advances, coldneſs and tepidity will (if not ſtopt in its progreſs) quickly grow to loathing and contempt. And indeed to what can we more reaſonably impute the great overflowings of profaneneſs among us, then to our ill-husbanding the means of Grace? Now certainly of all thoſe means there is none of greater energy and power then the bleſſed Sacrament.

69. Were

69. Were there no other benefit derived from it ſave that which the preparation implies, 'twere very conſiderable. It brings us to a recollection, fixes our indefinite purpoſes of ſearching and trying our ways, which elſe perhaps we ſhould infinitely defer; ſtops our carreer in ſin, and by acquainting us with our ſelves, ſhews us where our danger lies, and how we are to avert it, what breaches are made in upon our ſouls, and how we muſt repair them; all which are with many ſeldom thought of, but when the time of communicating approaches. We live ſo far off from our ſelves, know ſo little what is done in us, that we anſwer the deſcription the Prophet makes of the ſurprize of *Babylon*, of which the King knew nothing till poſt after poſt run to inform him that his *City was taken at one end*, Jer. 51. 14. we often lie ſecure while the enemy is within our walls, and therefore they are friendly alarms which the Sacrament gives us to look to our defence. But if when the Trumpet ſounds none will prepare himſelf to the Battel, if when the Miniſter gives warning of a Sacrament, and the preparation it requires, we go our ways, and with *Gallio*, *care for none of thoſe things*, or with *Felix*, Acts 24. 26. *put it off to a convenient time*, we wilfully expoſe our ſelves, and 'tis but juſt Chriſts dreadful menace ſhould be executed upon us, that we *die in our ſins*, who will fruſtrate ſuch an opportunity of a reſcue from them.

70. But

70. But 'tis not only this remoter and accidental advantage (this preventing Grace) which the Holy Eucharist affords, it contains yet greater and more intrinsic benefits, is a Spring of assisting Grace also, 'tis a Magazine of Spiritual Artillery to fortifie us against all assaults of the Devil, the great Catholicon for all the Maladies of our Souls, that which, if duly received, will qualifie us to make St. *Pauls* boast, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me*, In a word 'tis to us whatever we need, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, because it possesses us of him who is so, 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. so that whenever we neglect it, we manifestly betray our own interest, and do implicitly chose death whilst we thus run from life.

71. Thus we see there is a concurrence of all sorts of Arguments for this Duty, oh that some (at least) of them may prevail; If we are not tractable enough to do it in obedience, yet let us be so ingenious as to do it for Love, for Gratitude, or if for neither of those, let us be at least so wise as to do it for interest, and advantage. I know people are apt to pretend, business, the Farm and the Oxen must excuse their coming to the Feast; but alas what business can there be of equal necessity or advantage with this? Yet even that Apology is superseded to those I now speak to, who as I observed before have leisure more then enough, so that it would be one part of the

benefit, its taking up ſome of their time: let me therefore earneſtly beſeech them, not to grudge a few of their vacant hours to this ſo happy an employment.

72. Did any of their near Friends and Relations invite them to an interview, they would not think him too importune, tho he repeated the ſummons weekly, nay daily, but would punctually obſerve the meeting: And when their Saviour much ſeldomer entreats their company, ſhall he not obtain it? muſt he never ſee them but at two or three ſolemn times of the year? and ſhall they wonder at any intervening invitation (as the *Shunamites* husband did at her going to the Prophet when it was *neither new Moon nor Sabbath*, 2 Kings 4.23.) and tell him 'tis not yet *Eaſter* or *Chriſtmas*; this were not only to be irreligious but rude: and methinks thoſe who ſtand ſo much upon the particulars of Civility to one another, ſhould not then only lay aſide their good manners when they are to treat with their Redeemer. Certainly he is not ſo unpleaſant company that they need ſhun his converſe: if he do appear ſo to any, 'tis that ſhunning that is the cauſe of it. He does not open his treaſures to ſtrangers: they that come now and then for form ſake, no wonder if their entertainment, be as cold as their addreſs. They that would indeed *taſte how ſweet the Lord is*, *Pſal.* 34. 8. muſt by the frequency of their coming ſhew the heartineſs of it, and then they would

indeed

indeed find it a *feast of fat things*, as the Prophet ſpeaks.

73. In a word, let them but make experiment, reſolve for a certain time (be it a year or thereabouts) to omit no opportunity, (and withal no due preparation) of communicating, I am a little confident they will afterwards need no other importunity but that of their own longings: the expiration of that definit time will prove the beginning of an indefinit; and their reſolutions will have no other limit but their lives. For certainly there is not in all the whole myſtery of Godlineſs, in all the Oeconomy of the Goſpel, ſo expedite, ſo infallible a means of growth in Grace, as a frequent and worthy participation of this bleſſed Sacrament; I cannot therefore more pertinently cloſe this Section, then with this exhortation to it, by which they will not only compleat all their Devotions, crown and hallow the reſt of their Oblations to God, but they will be advanced alſo in all parts of practical Piety: for tho this and other ſacred Offices be perform'd in the Church, the efficacy of them is not circumſcribed within thoſe walls, but follows the devout ſoul through all the occurrences of humane life.

74. She that has intently conſider'd the preſence of God in the Sanctuary, has learn'd ſo much of his ubiquity, that ſhe will not eaſily forget it in other places, and ſhe that remembers that ſhe will need no other guard to ſecure her innocence,

no other incentive to animate her endeavors, since she is view'd by him who is equally powerful to punish or reward, who regards not the persons of the mighty, nor can be awed into the connivance of a crime. Indeed a serious advertence to the divine Presence, is the most certain curb to all disorderly appetites, as on the contrary the not having God before their eies, is in Scripture the comprehensive description of the most wretchless profligated state of sin. It concerns therefore all those who aspire to true Piety to nourish that awful sense in their hearts, as that which will best enable them to practice the Apostles advice, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *To cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.*

75. I am sensible that this Section is spun out to a length very unproportionable to the former; but as the principal wheel in an artificial movement may be allowed a bulk somwhat answerable to its use; so upon the same account, the size of this is not unjustifiable; the Piety which this designs to recommend being the one necessay thing, which must influence all other endowments. We know the course resemblance *Solomon* makes of a *fair woman without discretion, that she is like a jewel of gold in a swines snout*, Prov. 11. 12. but even that discretion (if any such could be) without Piety were but the adding one jewel more, exposing another valuable thing to the same despi-

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cable ridiculous uſe. But to ſpeak truly there is no real diſcretion, where there is no Religion: and therefore *Solomon* ſeems in this place to underſtand by it that practical Wiſdom, which in the ſacred Dialect (his writings eſpecially) is equivalent to the fear of the Lord. 'Tis true, there may be a rallying wit to ſcoff and abuſe, a ſerpentine Wilineſs to undermine and deceive, but that ſort of Wiſdom (like that of *Achitophel*) finally converts into fooliſhneſs, does very often appear to do ſo in this life, but muſt certainly in the next, becauſe it builds upon a falſe bottom, prefers temporal things before eternal. And as neither beauty nor wit (the two celebrated accompliſhments of women) ſo will neither Greatneſs and Honour give any advantage without Piety, 'twill only (as hath been already obſerved) make them more exemplary ſinners, inflame the account, and ſo expoſe them to a greater degree of condemnation, for ſure 'tis not their Sex that will reſcue them from the diſmal denunciation of the Wiſe man, *Wiſd.6.6. Mighty men ſhall be mightily tormented.* I conclude all with another irrefragable maxim of the ſame Author. *Whether one be Rich, Noble, or Poor, their Glory is the Fear of the Lord.*

THE

THE
LADIES CALLING.

The Second Part.

THE Ladies Calling.

PART II. SECT. I.

Of Virgins.

1. WE have taken a view of thoſe general qualifications, which are at once the duty and the ornament of the female Sex, conſider'd at large. Theſe like the common Genus involve all; but there are alſo ſpecifick differences, ariſing from the ſeveral circumſtances and ſtates of life; ſome whereof may exact greater degrees even of the former virtues, and all may have ſome diſtinct and peculiar requiſits adapted to that particular ſtate and condition: and of theſe our propoſed method engages us now to conſider. Humane life is full of viciſſitudes and changes, ſo that 'tis impoſſible to enumerate all

the leſſer accidental alterations to which it is lyable. But the principal and moſt diſtinct ſcenes, in which a Woman can be ſuppos'd regularly to be an actor, are theſe three, Virginity, Marriage and Widowhood; which as they differ widely from each other, ſo for the diſcharging their reſpective duties, there are peculiar cautions worthy to be adverted to.

2. Virginity is firſt in order of time, and if we will take St. *Pauls* judgment in reſpect of excellence alſo, 1 *Cor.* 7. And indeed ſhe that preſerves her ſelf in that ſtate upon the account he mentions, verſ. 33. that *ſhe may care for the things that are of the Lord, that ſhe may be holy both in body and in Spirit*, deſerves a great deal of veneration, as making one of the neareſt approaches to the Angelical State. And accordingly in the primitive times, ſuch a Virginity was had in a ſingular eſtimation, and by the aſſignment of the Schoolmen, hath a particular coronet of glory belonging to it. Nay even among the Heathens, a conſecrated Virgin was lookt on as a thing moſt ſacred. The Roman Veſtals had extraordinary priviledges allowed them by the State; and they were generally held in ſuch reverence, that Teſtaments and other depoſitums of the greateſt truſt were uſually committed to their cuſtody, as to the ſureſt and moſt inviolable Sanctuary. Nay their preſence was ſo to convicted malefactors; the Magiſtrates veiling their *faſces* when they appear'd, and giving up the Criminal to the commanding interceſſion of Virgin innocence.

3. As

3. As for the religious orders of Virgins in the preſent Roman Church, though ſome and thoſe very great abuſes have crept in; yet I think 'twere to be wiſh'd, that thoſe who ſuppreſt them in this nation, had confin'd themſelves within the bounds of a reformation, by chooſing rather to rectifie and regulate, then aboliſh them.

4. But though there be not among us ſuch ſocieties; yet there may be *Nuns* who are not profeſt. She who hath devoted her heart to God, and the better to ſecure his intereſt againſt the moſt inſinuating Rival of Humane Love, intends to admit none, and prayes that ſhe may not; does by thoſe humble purpoſes conſecrate her ſelf to God: and perhaps more acceptably then if her preſumption ſhould make her more poſitive, and engage her in a vow ſhe is not ſure to perform.

5. But this is a caſe does not much need ſtating in our Clime, wherein women are ſo little tranſported with this zeal of voluntary Virginity, that there are but few can find patience for it when neceſſary. An old maid is now thought ſuch a curſe, as no Poetic fury can exceed; lookt on as the moſt calamitous creature in nature. And I ſo far yield to the opinion, as to confeſs it ſo to thoſe who are kept in that ſtate againſt their wills: but ſure the original of that miſery is from the deſire, not the reſtraint of Marriage: let them but ſuppreſs that once, and the other will never be their infelicity. But I muſt not be ſo unkind to the Sex, as to think 'tis alwayes ſuch deſire that gives them averſion to Celibacy;

I doubt not many are frighted only with the Vulgar contempt under which that ſtate lies: for which if there be no cure, yet there is the ſame armor againſt this which is againſt all other cauſeleſs reproaches, *viz.* to contemn it. Yet I am a little apt to believe there may be a prevention in the caſe. If the ſuperannuated Virgins would behave themſelves with gravity and reſervedneſs, addict themſelves to the ſtricteſt vertue and piety, they would give the world ſome cauſe to believe, 'twas not their neceſſity but their choiſe which kept them unmarried; that they were pre-engag'd to a better Amour; eſpouſed to a ſpiritual Bridegroom: and this would give them among the ſoberer ſort, at leaſt the reverence and eſteem of Matrons. Or if after all caution and endeavour, they chance to fall under the tongues of malicious ſlanderers; this is no more then happens in all other inſtances of duty: and if contempt be to be avoided, Chriſtianity it ſelf muſt be quitted, as well as virgin Chaſtity. But if on the other ſide they endeavour to diſguiſe their age, by all the impoſtures and gaieties of a youthful dreſs and behavior, if they ſtill herd themſelves among the youngeſt and vaineſt company, betray a young mind in an aged body; this muſt certainly expoſe them to ſcorn and cenſure. If no play, no ball, or dancing meeting can eſcape them, people will undoubtedly conclude that they deſire to put off themſelves, to meet with chapmen, who ſo conſtantly keep the fairs. I wiſh therefore they would more univerſally try the former expedient, which

which I am confident is the beſt amulet againſt the reproach they ſo much dread, and may alſo deliver them from the danger of a more coſtly remedy, I mean that of an unequal and imprudent match, which many have ruſh'd upon as they have ran frighted from the other, and ſo by an unhappy contradiction, do both ſtay long and marry haſtily; gall their neck to ſpare their ears, and run into the yoke rather then hear ſo ſlight and unreaſonable a reproach. They need not, I think, be upbraided with the folly of ſuch an election, ſince their own experience is (to many of them) but too ſevere a monitor. I ſhall not inſiſt farther on this, but having given the elder Virgins that enſign of their ſeniority as to ſtand firſt in my diſcourſe, I ſhall now addreſs more generally to the reſt.

6. And here the two grand elements eſſential to the Virgin ſtate are Modeſty and Obedience; which though neceſſary to all, yet are in a more eminent degree requir'd here; and therefore, though I have ſpoken largely of the vertue of Modeſty in the firſt part of this tract, yet it will not be impertinent to make ſome farther reflections on it, by way of application to Virgins, in whom modeſty ſhould appear in its higheſt elevation, and ſhould come up to Shamefacedneſs. Her look, her ſpeech, her whole behaviour ſhould own an humble diſtruſt of her ſelf; ſhe is to look on her ſelf, but as a novice, a probationer in the world, and muſt take this time, rather to learn and obſerve, then to dictate and preſcribe. Indeed there is ſcarce any thing looks

looks more indecent, then to ſee a young maid too forward and confident in her talk. 'Tis the opinion of the Wiſeman, Eccleſ. 32. 8. that *a young man ſhould ſcarce ſpeak, though twice asked*, in proportion to which, 'twill ſure not become a young woman, whoſe Sex puts her under greater reſtraints, to be either importunate or magiſterial in her diſcourſe. And though that which former Ages called boldneſs, is now only aſſurance and good breeding, yet we have ſeen ſuch bad Superſtructures upon that foundation, as ſure will not much recommend it to any conſidering perſon.

7. But there is another breach of Modeſty as it relates to Chaſtity, in which they are yet more eſpecially concern'd. The very name of Virgin imports a moſt critical niceneſs in that point. Every indecent curioſity, or impure fancy, is a deflowring of the mind, and every the leaſt corruption of them gives ſome degrees of defilement to the body too: for between the ſtate of pure immaculate Virginity and arrant proſtitution there are many intermedial ſteps, and ſhe that makes any of them, is ſo far departed from her firſt integrity. She that liſtens to any wanton diſcourſe, hath violated her eares; ſhe that ſpeakes any, her tongue; every immodeſt glance, vitiates her eye; and every the lighteſt act of dalliance leaves ſomething of ſtain and ſullage behind it. There is therefore a moſt rigorous caution requiſite herein: for as nothing is more clean and white then a perfect Virginity, ſo every the leaſt ſpot or ſoil is the more diſcernible. Beſides youth

youth is for the moſt part flexible, and eaſily warps into a crookedneſs, and therefore can never ſet it ſelf too far from a temptation. Our tender bloſſoms we are fain to skreen and ſhelter, becauſe every unkindly air nips and deſtroies them; and nothing can be more nice and delicate then a maiden virtue, which ought not to be expos'd to any of thoſe malignant airs which may blaſt and corrupt it, of which God knows there are too many, ſome that blow from within, and others from without.

8. Of the firſt ſort there is none more miſchievous then Curioſity, a temptation which foil'd humane Nature even in Paradiſe: and therefore ſure a feeble girle ought not to truſt her ſelf with that which ſubdued her better fortified parent. The truth is, an affected ignorance cannot be ſo blamable in other caſes as it is commendable in this. Indeed it is the ſureſt and moſt invincible guard, for ſhe who is curious to know indecent things, 'tis odds but ſhe will too ſoon and too dearly buy the learning. The ſuppreſſing and deteſting all ſuch curioſities is therefore that eminent fundamental piece of continence I would recommend to them, as that which will protect and ſecure all the reſt.

9. But when they have ſet this guard upon themſelves, they muſt provide againſt forreign aſſaults too; the moſt dangerous whereof I take to be ill Company, and Idleneſs. Againſt the firſt they muſt provide by a prudent choiſe of converſation, which ſhould generally be of their own Sex; yet not

not all of that neither, but ſuch who will at leaſt entertain them innocently, if not profitably. Againſt the ſecond they may ſecure themſelves by a conſtant ſeries of emploiment: I mean not ſuch frivolous ones as are more idle then doing nothing; but ſuch as are ingenious, and ſome way worth their time, wherein as the firſt place is to be given to the offices of piety, ſo in the intervals of thoſe, there are divers others, by which they may not unuſefully fill up the vacancies of their time: ſuch are the acquiring of any of thoſe ornamental improvements which become their quality, as Writing, Needle-works, Languages, Muſick, or the like. If I ſhould here inſert the art of Oeconomy and Houſhold Managery, I ſhould not think I affronted them in it; that being the moſt proper feminine buſineſs, from which neither wealth nor greatneſs can totally abſolve them; and a little of the theory in their Parents houſe, would much aſſiſt them towards the practick when they come to their own. In a word there are many parts of knowledg uſeful for civil as well as divine life; and the improving themſelves in any of thoſe is a rational emploiment.

10. But I confeſs I know not how to reduce to that head many of thoſe things which from divertiſements are now ſtept up to the ſolemn buſineſs of many young Ladies, (and I doubt of ſome old;) ſuch is in the firſt place gaming, a recreation whoſe lawfulneſs I queſtion not, whilſt it keeps within the bounds of a recreation: but when it ſets

up

up for a calling, I know not whence it derives its licenſe. And a calling ſure it ſeems to be with ſome, a laborious one too, ſuch as they toil night and day at, nay do not allow themſelves that remiſſion which the laws both of God and man have provided for the meaneſt mechanic: the Sabbath is to them no day of reſt, but this trade goes on when all ſhops are ſhut. I know not how they ſatisfy themſelves in ſuch an habitual waſt of their time, (beſides all the incidental faults of avarice and anger) but I much doubt that plea, whatſoever it is, which paſſes with them, will ſcarce hold weight at his Tribunal, who has commanded us to *redeem*, not fling away *our time*.

II. There is another thing to which ſome devote a very conſiderable part of their time, and that is the reading Romances, which ſeems now to be brought the peculiar and only becoming ſtudy of young Ladies. I confeſs their youth may a little adapt it to them when they were children, and I wiſh they were alwaies in their event as harmleſs; but I fear they often leave ill impreſſions behind them. Thoſe amorous paſſions, which 'tis their deſign to paint to the utmoſt life, are apt to inſinuate themſelves into their unwary readers, and by an unhappy inverſion, a copy ſhall produce an original. When a poor young creature ſhall read there of ſome triumphant Beauty, that has I know not how many captivated Knights proſtrate at her feet, ſhe will probably be tempted to think it a fine thing; and may reflect how much ſhe looſes time,

that has not yet ſubdu'd one heart: and then her buſineſs will be to ſpread her nets; lay her toils to catch ſomebody, who will more fatally enſnare her. And when ſhe has once wound her ſelf into an amour, thoſe Authors are ſubtil caſuiſts for all difficult caſes that may occur in it, will inſtruct in the neceſſary Artifices of deluding Parents and Friends, and put her ruine perfectly in her own power. And truly this ſeems to be ſo natural a conſequent of this ſort of ſtudy, that of all the divertiſements that look ſo innocently, they can ſcarce fall upon any more hazardous. Indeed it is very difficult to imagine what vaſt miſchief is don to the World, by the falſe notions and images of things; particularly of Love and Honor, thoſe nobleſt concerns of human life, repreſented in theſe Mirrors: but when we conſider upon what principles the Duelliſts and Hectors of the Age defend their outrages; and how great a devotion is paid to luſt, inſtead of vertuous Love; we can not be to ſeek for the Goſpel which makes theſe doctrines appear orthodox.

12. As for the entertainments which they find abroad, they may be innocent, or otherwiſe according as they are managed. The common entercourſe of Civility is a dept to Humanity, and therefore mutual viſits may often be neceſſary, and ſo (in ſome degree) may be ſeveral harmleſs and healthful recreations which may call them abroad: for I write not now to Nuns, and have no purpoſe to confine them to a Cloiſter. Yet on the other

ſide

ſide to be alwaies wandring, is the condition of a vagabond, and of the two 'tis better to be a Priſoner to ones home, then a Stranger. *Solomon* links it with ſome very unlaudable qualities of a Woman *Prov.* 7. 11. that *her feet abide not in her houſe*, and 'tis an unhappy impotence not to be able to ſtay at home, when there is any thing to be ſeen abroad; that any mask, or revel, any jollity of others muſt be their rack and torment, if they can not get to it. Alas ſuch meetings are not ſo ſure to be ſafe, that they had need be frequent, and they are of all others leaſt like to be ſafe to thoſe, who much dote on them: and therefore thoſe that find they do ſo, had need to counterbiaſs their minds, and ſet them to ſomthing better, and by more ſerious entertainments ſupplant thoſe vanities, which at the beſt are childiſh; and may often prove worſe; it being too probable that thoſe Dinah's which are ſtill gadding, tho on pretence to ſee only the daughters of the land *Gen.* 34. may at leaſt meet with a ſon of Hamor.

13. There is alſo another great devourer of time ſubſervient to the former, I mean dreſſing: for they that Love to be ſeen much abroad, will be ſure to be ſeen in the moſt exact form. And this is an emploiment that does not ſteal but challenge their time; what they waſt here is *cum Privilegio*, it being by the verdict of this age the proper buſineſs, the one ſcience wherein a young Lady is to be perfectly verſt; ſo that now all vertuous emulation is converted into this ſingle ambition, who ſhall

excel in this faculty. A vanity which I confeſs is more excuſable in the youngeſt then the elder ſort; they being ſuppoſable not yet to have outworn the reliques of their childhood, to which toies and gaiety were proportionable. Beſides 'tis ſure allowable upon a ſoberer account, that they who deſign Marriage ſhould give themſelves the advantage of decent ornaments, and not by the negligent rudeneſs of their dreſs bely Nature, and render themſelves leſs amiable then ſhe has made them. But all this being granted, 'twill by no means juſtify that exceſſive curioſity and ſolicitude, that expence of time and mony too which is now uſed; a very moderate degree of all thoſe will ſerve for that ordinary decency which they need provide for, will keep them from the reproch of an affected ſingularity, which is as much as a ſober perſon need take care for. And I muſt take leave to ſay, that in order to a marriage, ſuch a moderation is much likelier to ſucceed then the contrary extravagance. Among the prudenter ſort of men I am ſure it is, if it be not among the looſe and vain, againſt which 'twill be their guard, and ſo do them the greater ſervice: for certainly he that chooſes a wife for thoſe qualities for which a wiſe man would refuſe her, underſtands ſo little what marriage is, as portends no great felicity to her that ſhall have him. But if they deſire to marry men of ſobriety and diſcretion, they are obliged in juſtice to bring the ſame qualities they expect, which will be very ill evidenced by that exceſs and vanity we now ſpeak of.

FOR

14. For to ſpeak a plain (tho perhaps ungrateful) truth, this (together with ſome of the modiſh liberties now in uſe) is it, which keeps ſo many young Ladies about the Town unmarried 'till they loſe the epithet of young. Sober men are afraid to venture upon a humor ſo diſagreeing to their own, leſt whilſt (according to the primitive reaſon of marriage) they ſeek a help, they eſpouſe a ruine. But this is eſpecially dreadful to a plain Country Gentleman, who looks upon one of theſe fine women as a Gaudy Idol, to whom if he once become a votary, he muſt ſacrifice a great part of his fortune, and all his content. How reaſonable that apprehenſion is, the many wracks of conſiderable families do too evidently atteſt. But I preſume ſome of the nicer Ladies have ſuch a contemt of any thing that they pleaſe to call ruſtic, that they will not much regret the averting of thoſe whom they ſo deſpiſe. They will not perhaps while they are in purſuit or hopes of others; but when thoſe fail, theſe will be lookt on as a welcome reſerve, and therefore 'twill be no prudence to cut themſelves off from that laſt reſort, leſt they (as many have done) betake themſelves to much worſe. For as in many inſtances 'tis the Country which feeds and maintains the grandeur of the Town, ſo of all commerces there, marriage would ſooneſt fail, if all Rural ſupplies were cut off.

15. But I have purſued this ſpeculation farther then perhaps my virgin readers will thank me for; I ſhall return to that which it was brought to in-

force,

force, and beseech them that if not to Men, yet to approve themselves to God, they will confine themselves in the matter of their dress within the due limits of decency and sobriety. I shall not direct them to those strict rules which *Tertullian* and some other of the ancient Fathers have prescribed in this matter; my petition is only that 'our virgins would at least so take care of their bodies, as Persons that also have a soul; which if they can be perswaded to, they may reserve much of their time for more worthy uses then those of the Comb, the Tuillets, and the Glasse. And truly 'tis not a little their concern to do so, for this spring of their age is that critical instant that must either confirm or blast the hopes of all the succeeding seasons. The minds of young people are usually compared to a blank sheet of paper, equally capable of the best or the worst impressions; 'tis pitty they should be fill'd with childish scrawls, and little insignificant figures, but 'tis shame and horror they should be staind with any vicious characters, any blots of impurity or dishonor. To prevent which let the severest notions of modesty and honor be early and deeply impresst upon their souls, graven as with the point of a Diamond, that they may be as indelible as they are indispensibly necessary to the virgin state.

16. THERE is also another very requisite quality, and that is Obedience The younger sort of virgins are supposed to have parents, or if any has bin so unhappy as to loose them early, they commonly are

are left in the charge of some friend or guardian, that is to supply the place; so that they cannot be to seek to whom this obedience is to be paid. And it is not more their duty then their interest to pay it. Youth is apt to be fooliſh in its deſigns, and heady in the purſuit of them; and there can be nothing more deplorable then to have it left to its ſelf. And therefore God, who permits not even the brutes to deſtitute their young ones till they attain to the perfection of their kind, has put children under the guidance and protection of their parents, 'till by the maturing of their judgments they are qualified to be their own conductors. Now this Obedience (as that which is due to all other ſuperiors) is to extend it ſelf to all things that are either good or indifferent, and has no clauſe of exception, but only where the command is unlawful. And in ſo wide a ſcene of action there will occur ſo many particular occaſions of ſubmiſſion, that they had need have a great reverence of their parents judgments, and diſtruſt of their own. And if it ſhould happen that ſome parents are not qualified to give them the former, yet the general imbecillity of their age, will remain a conſtant ground of the later: ſo that they may ſafelier venture themſelves to their parents miſguidance, then their own; by how much the errors of humility and obedience, are leſſe malignant then thoſe of preſumtion and arrogance.

17. BUT this is a doctrine which will ſcarce paſs for orthodox with many of the young women of our

our daies, with whom 'tis prejudice enough againſt the prudenteſt advice that it comes from their parents. 'Tis the grand ingenuity of theſe times to turn every thing into Ridicule; and if a girle can but rally ſmartly upon the ſober admonition of a parent, ſhe concludes ſhe is the abler perſon: takes her ſelf for a wit, and the other for a lop; (a bugbear word deviſed to fright all ſerioufneſs and ſobriety out of the World;) and learns not only to diſobey but to contemn. Indeed the great confidence that youth now ſeems to have of its ſelf, as it is very indecent, ſo is it extremely pernicious. Children that will attemt to go alone before their time, oft get dangerous falls; and when thoſe who are but little removed from children, ſhall caſt off the wiſer conduct of others, they oft ſadly miſcarry by their own.

18. I know this age has ſo great a contemt of the former, that 'tis but matter of ſcorn to alledg any of their cuſtoms, elſe I ſhould ſay that the liberties that are taken now, would then have bin ſtartled at. They that ſhould then have ſeen a young maid rambling abroad without her mother, or ſome other prudent perſon, would have lookt on her as a ſtray, and thought it but a neighborly office to have brought her home; whereas now 'tis a rarity to ſee them in any company graver then themſelves, and ſhe that goes with her parent (unleſs it be ſuch a parent as is as wild as herſelf) thinks ſhe does but walk abroad with her jailor. But ſure there are no ſmall miſchiefs that attend

this

this liberty, for it leaves them perfectly to the choise of their company, a thing of too weighty an importance for giddy heads to determin; who will be sure to elect such as are of their own humor, with whom they may keep up a traffic of little impertinencies and trifling entertainments; and so by consequence condemn themselves never to grow wiser, which they might do by an ingenuous conversation. Nay 'tis well if that negative ill be the worst, for it gives opportunity to any that have ill designs upon them. It will be easy getting into their company, who have no guard to keep any body out, and as easy by little compliances and flatteries to insinuate into their good graces, who have not the sagacity to discern to what insidious purposes those blandishments are directed; and when they once begin to nibble at the bait, to be pleased with the Courtship, 'tis great odds they do not escape the hook.

18. Alas how many poor innocent creatures have bin thus indiscernibly ensnared; have at first perhaps only liked the wit and raillery, perhaps the language and address, then the freedom and good humor; 'till at last they come to like the person. It is therefore a most necessary caution for young women, not to trust too much to their own conduct, but to own their dependance on those, to whom God and nature has subjected them, and to look on it not as their restraint and burden, but as their shelter and protection. For where once the autority of a parent comes to be despis'd, tho in

the lightest instance, it laies the foundation of utmost disobedience. She that will not be prescrib'd to in the choise of her ordinary diverting company, will less be so in chosing the fixt companion of her life; and we find it often eventually true, that those who govern themselves in the former, will not be govern'd by their friends in the latter, but by preengagements of their own prevent their elections for them.

10. And this is one of the highest injuries they can do their parents, who have such a native right in them, that 'tis no less an injustice then disobedience to dispose of themselves without them. This right of the parent is so undoubted, that we find God himself gives way to it, and will not suffer the most holy pretence, no not that of a vow, to invade it, as we may see his own stating of the case 30. *Numb.* How will he then resent it, to have this so indispensible a law violated upon the impulse of an impotent passion, an amorous inclination? Nor is the folly less then the sin: they injure and afflict their parents, but they generally ruine and undo themselves. And that upon a double account, first as to the secular part. Those that are so rash as to make such matches, cannot be imagined so provident as to examine how agreable 'tis to their interest; or to contrive for any thing beyond the marriage. The thoughts of their future temporal conditions (like those of the eternal) can find no room amidst their fooliſh raptures; but as if love were indeed that Deity which the Poets feigned,

they

they depend on it for all, and take no farther care. And the event dos commonly too ſoon inſtruct them in the deceitfulneſs of that truſt; love being ſo unable to ſupport them, that it cannot maintain its ſelf; but quickly expires when it has brought the lovers into thoſe ſtraits, from whence it cannot reſcu them. So that indeed it does but play the decoy with them, brings them into the nooſe and then retires. For when ſecular wants begin to pinch them, all the tranſports of their kindneſs doe uſually convert into mutual accuſations, for having made each other miſerable.

21. And indeed there is no reaſon to expect any better event, becauſe in the ſecond place they forfeit their title to the divine bleſſing; nay they put themſelves out of the capacity to ask it, it being a ridiculous impudence to beg God to proſper the tranſgreſſions of his law. Such weddings ſeem to invoke only ſome of the Poetic Romantic Deities, *Venus* and *Hymen*, from whence they derive a happineſs as fictitious as are the Gods that are to ſend it. Let all Virgins therefore religiouſly obſerve this part of Obedience to their parents, that they may not only have their benediction but Gods. And to that purpoſe let this be laid as a fundamental rule, that they never hearken to any propoſal of marriage made them from any other hand; but when any ſuch overture is made, divert the addreſs from her ſelf and direct it to her parents, which will be the beſt teſt imaginable for any pretender. For if he know himſelf worthy of her, he will

not

not fear to avow his design to them; and therefore if he decline that, 'tis a certain symptom, he is conscious of somthing that he knows will not give a valuable consideration; so that this course will repel no suitor but such as it is their interest not to admit. Besides 'tis most agreable to the virgin modesty, which should make marriage an act rather of their obedience then their choise; and they that think their friends too slow paced in the matter, and seek to outrun them, give cause to suspect they are spurr'd on by somwhat too warm desires.

22. But as a Daughter is neither to anticipate, nor contradict the will of her Parent, so (to hang the ballance even) I must say she is not obliged to force her own, by marrying where she cannot love; for a negative voice in the case is sure as much the childs right as the Parents. It is true she ought well to examine the grounds of her aversion, and if they prove only childish and fanciful, should endeavor to correct them by reason and sober consideration; but if after all she cannot leave to hate, I think she should not proceed to marry. I confess I see not how she can without a sacrilegious hypocrisy, vow so solemnly to love where she at the instant actually abhorrs: and where the married state is begun with such a perjury, 'tis no wonder to find it continued on at the same rate, that other parts of the vow be also violated; and that she observe the negative part no more then the positive, and as little forsake others, as she does heartily

heartily cleave to her husband. I fear this is a conſequence whereof there are too many ſad inſtances now extant; for tho doubtleſs, there are ſome Vertues which will hold out againſt all the temptations their averſions can give, nay which do at laſt even conquer thoſe averſions, and render their duty as eaſy as they have kept it ſafe; yet we find there are but ſome that do ſo; that it is no inſeparable property of the ſex, and therefore it is ſure too hazardous an experiment for any of them to venture on.

22. And if they may not upon the more generous motive of Obedience, much leſs may they upon the worſe inducements of Avarice and Ambition; for a woman to make a vow to the man, and yet intend only to marry his fortune, or his title, is the baſeſt inſincerity and ſuch as in any other kind of civil contracts, would not only have the infamy but the puniſhment of a cheat. Nor will it all ſecure them, that in this 'tis only liable to Gods tribunal, for that is not like to make the doom leſs but more heavy, it being as the Apoſtle witneſſes, *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Heb. 10. 31. In a word, marriage is Gods ordinance, and ſhould be conſider'd as ſuch; not made a ſtale to any unworthy deſign. And it may well be preſum'd one cauſe why ſo few matches are happy, that they are not built upon a right foundation. Some are grounded upon wealth, ſome on beauty, too ſandy bottoms God knows to raiſe any laſting felicity on: whilſt in the interim,

interim, vertu and piety, the only solid Basis for that superstructure, are scarce ever consider'd. Thus God is commonly left out of the consultation. The Lawyers are resorted to, to secure the settlements, all sorts of Artificers to make up the equipage, but he is neither advis'd with as to the motives, nor scarce supplicated as to the event of wedding. Indeed 'tis a deplorable sight to see with what lightness an unconcernedness young people go to that weightiest action of their lives; that a marriage day is but a kind of Bacchanal, a more licensed avowed revel, when if they duly consider'd it, 'tis the hinge upon which their future life moves, which turns them over to a happy or miserable being; and therefore ought to be enter'd upon with the greatest seriousness and devotion. Our Church advises excellently in the preface to matrimony, and I wish they would not only give it the hearing at the time, but make it their study a good while before; yea and the marriage vow too, which is so strict and awfull a bond, that methinks they had need well vveigh every branch of it, ere they enter it; and by the ferventest praiers implore that God, who is the witness, to be their assistant too in its performance.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of Wives.

1. AND now having conducted the virgin to the entrance of another ſtate, I muſt ſhift the ſcene and attend her thither alſo. And here ſhe is lanched into a wide ſea, that one relation of a wife drawing after it many others: for as ſhe eſpouſes the man ſo ſhe does his obligations alſo; and wherever he by ties of nature or alliance owes a reverence or kindneſs, ſhe is no leſs a debtor. Her marriage is an adoption into his family, and therefore ſhe is to every branch of it to pay what their ſtations there do reſpectively require. To define which more particularly, would be a work of more length then profit. I ſhall therefore confine the preſent conſideration to the relation ſhe ſtands in to her husband, and (what is uſually concomitant with that) her children, and her ſervants, and ſo ſhall conſider her in the three capacities of a Wife, a Mother, and a Miſtreſs.

2. In that of a Wife her duty has ſeverall aſpects, as it relates, firſt to his Perſon, ſecondly to his Reputation, thirdly to his Fortune. The firſt debt to his perſon is Love, which we find ſet as the prime Article in the Marriage vow; and indeed that is the moſt eſſential requiſite; without this 'tis only a Bargain and Compact, a Tyranny perhaps on

on the mans part, and a Slavery on the womans. 'Tis Love only, that cements the hearts, and where that union is wanting, 'tis but a ſhadow, a carcaſs of marriage. Therefore as it is very neceſſary to bring ſome degree of this, to this State; ſo 'tis no leſs to maintain and improve it in it. This is it which facilitates all other duties of marriage; makes the yoke ſit ſo lightly, that it rather pleaſes then galls. It ſhould therefore be the ſtudy of Wives to preſerve this flame; that like the veſtal fire it may never go out: and to that end carefully to guard it from all thoſe things which are naturally apt to extinguiſh it; of which kind are all frowardneſs and little perverſneſs of humor; all ſullen and moroſe behavior, which by taking off from the delight and complacency of converſation, will by degrees wear off the kindneſs.

3. But of all I know nothing more dangerous then that unhappy paſſion of Jealouſy, which tho 'tis ſaid to be the child of love, yet like the viper, its birth is the certain deſtruction of the parent. As therefore they muſt be nicely careful to give their husbands no color, no leaſt unbrage for it; ſo ſhould they be as reſolute to reſiſt all that occurs to themſelves, be ſo far from that buſy curioſity, that induſtry to find cauſes of ſuſpicion; that even where they preſented themſelves they ſhould avert the conſideration, put the moſt candid conſtruction upon any doubtful action. And indeed charity in this inſtance, has not more of the Dove then of the Serpent. It is infinitly the wiſeſt

courſe

course, both in relation to her present quiet, and her future innocence. The entertaining a jealous fancy, is the admitting the most treacherous the most disturbing inmate in the World, and she opens her breast to a fury that lets it in.' Tis certainly one of the most enchanting frensies imaginable, keeps her alwaies in a most restless importunate search after that which she dreads and abhors to find, and makes her equally miserable when she is injured, and when she is not.

4. AND as she totally looses her ease, so 'tis odds but she will part also with some degrees of her innocence. Jealousy is commonly attended with a black train; it musters all the forces of our irascible part, to abet its quarrel; Wrath and Anger, Malice and Revenge: and by how much the female impotence to govern those passions is the greater; so much the more dangerous is it to admit that which will so surely set them in an uproar. For if *Jealousy* be as the wise man saies *the rage of a man* Prov. 6. 32. we may well think it may be the fury the madness of a woman; and indeed all ages have given tragical instances of it, not only in the most indecent fierceness and clamor, but in the solemn mischiefs of actual revenges. Nay 'tis to be doubted there have bin some whose malice has rebounded, and have ruined themselves in spight: have bin adulterous by way of retaliation: and taken more scandalous liberties then those they complained of in their husbands. And when such enormous effects as these are the issues of jealousy;

it ought to keep women on the ſtricteſt guard againſt it.

5. BUT perhaps it may be ſaid that ſome are not left to their Jealouſy and conjectures; but have more demonſtrative proofs. In this age 'tis indeed no ſtrange thing for men to publiſh their ſin as *Sodom*, and the offender does ſometimes not diſcover but boaſt his crime. In this caſe I confeſs 'twill be ſcarce poſſible to disbelieve him; but even here a wife has this advantage, that ſhe is out of the pain of Suſpence; ſhe knows the utmoſt, and therefore is now at leſure to convert all that induſtry which ſhe would have uſed for the diſcovery, to fortify her ſelf againſt a known calamity; which ſure ſhe may as well do in this as in any other; a patient Submiſſion being the one Catholicon in all diſtreſſes; and as the ſlighteſt can overwhelm us if we add our own impatience towards our ſinking; ſo the greateſt cannot, if we deny it that aid. They are therefore far in the wrong, who in caſe of this injury purſue their husbands with virulencies and reproches. This is as *Solomon* ſaies *Prov.* 25. 20. *The powring vinegar upon nitre*, applying corroſives when balſoms are moſt needed; whereby they not only encreaſe their own ſmart, but render the wound incurable. They are not thunders and earthquakes, but ſoft gentle rains that cloſe the ſciſſures of the ground; and the breaches of Wedlock will never be cemented by ſtorms and loud outcries. Many men have bin made worſe, but ſcarce ever any better by it; for guilt covets

nothing

nothing more then an opportunity of recriminating; and where the husband can accuſe the wives bitterneſs, he thinks he need no other apology for his own luſt.

6. A Wise Diſſimulation, or very calm notice is ſure the likelieſt means of reclaiming, for where men have not wholly put off humanity, there is a native compaſſion to a meek ſufferer. We have naturally ſome regret to ſee a Lamb under the knife; whereas the impatient roaring of a ſwine diverts our pitty; ſo that Patience in this caſe is as much the intereſt as duty of a Wife.

7. But there is another inſtance wherein that vertu has a yet ſeverer trial, and that is when a Wife lies under the cauſeleſs jealouſies of the husband, (I ſay cauſeleſs, for if they be juſt 'tis not ſo much a ſeaſon for patience, as for repentance and reformation.) This is ſure one of the greateſt calamities that can befall a vertuous woman, who as ſhe accounts nothing ſo dear as her loialty and honor; ſo thinks no infelicity can equall the aſperſing of thoſe; eſpecially when 'tis from him, to whom ſhe has bin the moſt ſolicitous to approve her ſelf. Yet God who permits nothing but what he directs to ſome wiſe and gracious end, has an overruling hand in this as well as in all other events of life; and therefore it becomes every woman in that condition, to examine ſtrictly what ſhe has don to provoke ſo ſevere a ſcourge; for tho her heart condemn her not of any falſneſs to her husband, yet probably it may of many diſloi-

alties to her God, and then she is humbly to accept even of this traducing of her innocence, as the punishment of her iniquity, and bear it with the same temper where with *David* did the unjust revilings of Shimei 2. *Kings.* 16. 10. *Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.*

8. AND when she hath made this penitent reflection on her real guilts, she may then with more courage encounter those imaginary ones which are charged on her; wherein she is to use all prudent and regular means for her justification, that being a debt she ows to truth, and her own fame; but if after all, the suspicion remains still fixed (as commonly those which are the most unreasonable are the most obstinate) she may still solace her self in her integrity, and Gods approbation of it. Nor ought she to think her self desolate, that has her appeal open to heaven. Therefore whilst she can look both inward and upward with comfort, why should she choose to fix her eies only on the object of her grief; and whilst her own complaint is of defamation, why should she so dishonor God and a good conscience, as to shew any thing can be more forcible to oppress, then they are to relieve and support? And if she may not indulge to grief, much less may she to anger, and bitterness.

9. INDEED if she consider how painfull a passion jealousy is, her husband will more need her pity, who though he be unjust to her, is yet cruel to himself; and as we do not use to have and malign those Lunatics who in their fits beat their friends, and

cut

cut and gash themselves, but rather make it our care to put all harmful engines out of their way; so should the wife not despitefully ruminate upon the injury, but wisely contrive to avert his temptations to more; by denying her self even the most innocent liberties, if she see they dissatisfy him. I know there have bin some of another opinion, and as if they thought jealousy were to be cured by majoration, have in angry contempt don things to inflame it; put on an unwonted freedom and jollity, to shew their husbands how little they had secur'd themselves by their distrust. But this as it is no Christian, so I conceive it is no prudent expedient; it serves to strengthen not only the husbands suspicion, but his party too, and make many others of his mind; and tis a little to be feared, that by using so to brave the Jealousy, they may at last come to verify it. I have bin the longer on this theme, because as Jealousy is the most fatal pest of a married life, so I think it more ordinarily occurs among people of quality, and with the worst and most durable effects; yet what ever pretences people may take hence, the marriage vow is too fast a knot to be loosened by fancies and chimeras; let a woman therefore be the person suspecting or suspected, neither will absolve her from that love to her husband she has sworn to pay.

10. But alas what hope is there that these greater temtations shall be resisted, when we see every the slightest disgust is now adaies to strong for the matrimonial love, nay indeed it does of course

course fall off of it self, which is an event so much expected, that 'tis no wonder to see it expire with the first circuit of the moon; but it is every bodies admiration to see it last one of the sun; and sometimes it vanishes so clearly, as not to leave so much as a shadow behind it, not so much as the formalities of marriage; one bed, one house cannot hold them, as if they had bin put together like caseshot in a gun, only that they might the more forcibly scatter several waies. Nay as if this were designed & intended in the first addresses unto marriage; a separate maintenance is of course afore hand contracted for, and becomes as solemn a part of the settlement, as a Jointure is. *Plutarch* observes of the ancient Romans, that for 230. years after the founding of their state, there never was one example of any married couple that separated: it is not likely they could have a more binding form of marriage then ours is, the difference must lie between their veracity and our falsness.

11. But even amongst those who desert not each other, too many do mutually fall from that entireness and affection which is the soul of marriage; and to help on the declination, there are fashionable Maxims taken up, to make men and their wives the greatest strangers to each other. Thus 'tis pronounced a piece of ill Breeding, a sign of a country Gentleman, to see a man go abroad with his own wife (I suppose those who brought up these rules are not to seek what use to make of them) and were the time of most of the modish

couples

couples computed, 'twould be found they are but few of their waking hours (I might say minutes) together; so, that if nothing else, meer desuetude and intermission of conversation must needs allay, if not quite extinguish their kindness. But I hope there are yet many who do not think the autority of a fashion greater then that of a vow; and such will still think it their duty both to own and cherish that kindness and affection they have so solemnly promis'd.

12. Another debt to the person of a husband is Fidelity: for as she has espoused all his interests, so she is oblig'd to be true to them. to keep all his secrets, to inform him of his dangers, yea and in a mild and gentle manner to admonish him of his faults. This is the most genuine act of friendship; therefore she who is placed in the neerest and most intimate degree of that relation, must not be wanting in it. She that lies in his bosome should be a kind of second conscience to him, by putting him in mind both of his duty and his aberrations, and as long as she can be but patiently heard 'tis her sin to omit it; 'tis the greatest trechery to his noblest, to his immortal part, and such as the most officious cares of his other interests can never expiate. Nay indeed she is unfaithful to her self in it, there being nothing that does so much secure the happiness of a Wife as the vertu and piety of the husband. Yet, tho this is to have her chiefest care, as being his principal interest, she is to neglect none of the inferior, but contribute her utmost

utmoſt to his advantage in all his concerns.

13. Beyond all theſe the matrimonial fidelity has a ſpecial notion as it relates to the Bed; and in that the wife is to be moſt ſeverely ſcrupulous, and never to admit ſo much as a thought or imagination, much leſſe any parly or treaty contrary to her loialty. Tis true wantonneſs is one of the fouleſt blots that can ſtain any of the ſex; but 'tis infinitly more odious in the married, it being in them an accumulation of crimes; perjury added to uncleanneſs; the infamy of their family ſuperſtructed upon their own; and accordingly all lawes have made a difference in their puniſhments. Adultery was by Gods own award puniſht with death among the Jews, *Levit.* 20. 10. And it ſeems it was ſo agreable to natural juſtice, that divers other nations did the like; and I know no reaſon, but the difficulty of detection, that ſhould any where give it a milder ſentence. The ſon of *Sirach* has excellently deſcrib'd the ſeveral gradations of the guilt *Eccluſ.* 23. 1. which I ſhall deſire the Reader to conſult: which who ſo does muſt certainly wonder at the Alchimy of this age, that from ſuch a maſs of ſhame and infamy can extract matter of confidence; that thoſe who lie under ſo many brands and ſtigmas, are ſo far from hiding their faces, that none ſhew them with ſo much boldneſs; and the aſſurance of the guilty far exceeds that of the innocent. But impudence is a ſlender ſhelter for guilt, and ſerves rather to betray then hide; ſo that they are not able to outface the opinions of men, much leſſe can they

they the judgments of God; who as he was solemnly invok'd as witness to their vow, so by his omnipresence is against their wills a witness too of its violations.

14. ANOTHER duty to the person of the husband is obedience, a word of a very harsh sound in the ears of some wives, but is certainly the duty of all: and that not only by their promise of it, tho that were sufficient; but from an original of much older date, it being the mulct that was laid upon the first womans disobedience to God, that she (and all derived from her) should be subject to the husband; so that the contending for superiority, is an attemt to reverse that fundamental law, which is almost as ancient as the World. But surely God with whom there is no shadow of change, will not make acts of repeal to satisfie the petulancy of a few masterless women. That statute will still stand in force, and if it cannot awe them into an observance, will not fail to consign them to punishment: And indeed this fault is commonly its own lictor, and does anticipate (tho not avert) its finall doom. The imperiousness of a woman dos often raise those storms, wherein her self is shipwrack'd. How pleasantly might many women have lived if they had not affected dominion. Nay how much of their will might they have had, if they had not strugled for it. For let a man be of never so gentle a temper (unless his head be softer then his heart) such a usurpation will awake him to assert his right. But if he be of a sowre severe nature, if he have as great

a desire of rule as she, backt with a much better title, what tempests what Hurricanes must two such opposite winds produce? And at last 'tis commonly the wives lot, after an uncreditable unjust war, to make as disadvantageous a peace; this (like all other ineffective rebellions) serving to straiten her yoke, to turn an ingenuous subjection into a slavish servitude: so that certainly it is not only the vertue, but the wisdom of wives to do that upon duty, which at last they must (with more unsupportable circumstances) do upon necessity.

15. AND as they ow these severalls to the person of the husband, so there is also a debt to his reputation. This they are to be extremely tender of, to advance it, by making all that is good in him as conspicuous, as public as they can; setting his worth in the cleerest light, but putting his infirmities in the shade; casting a veil upon those to skreen them from the eies of others, nay (as far as is possible) from their own too; there being nothing acquir'd to the wife by contemplating the husbands weekness, but a temtation of despising him; which tho bad enough in it self, is yet rendered worse by that train of mischievous consequence which usually attend it. In case therefore of any notable imperfections in him, her safest way will be to consider them no farther then she can be instrumental to the curing them; but to divert from those, and reflect upon her own, which perhaps impartially weighed, may ballance, if not overpoise

his

his. And indeed those wives who are apt to blaze their husbands faults, do shew that they have either little adverted to their own, or else find them so great, that they are forced to that art of diversion, and seek in his infamy to drown theirs. But that project is a little unlucky, for nothing does in sober judges create greater prejudice to a woman, then to see her forward in impeaching her husband.

16. But besides this immediate tenderness of his reputation, there is another by way of reflection, which consists in a care that she her self do nothing which may redound to his dishonor. There is so strict a union between a man and his wife, that the law counts them one person, and consequently they can have no divided interest, so that the misbehavior of the woman reflects ignominiously on the man, it therefore concerns them as well upon their husbands as their own account, to abstain even from all appearance of evil, and provide that themselves be (what *Cesar* is said to have required of his wife) not only without guilt, but without scandal also.

17. Another part of the wives duty relates to her husbands fortune, the management whereof is not ordinarily the wives province, but where the husband thinks fit to make it so, she is oblig'd to administer it with her best care and industry; not by any neglect of hers to give others opportunity of defrauding him: yet on the other side not by an immoderate tenacity or griping, to bring upon him and her self the reproch, and which is

worſe the curſe that attends exaction and oppreſſion. But this is not uſually the wives field of action, tho he that ſhall conſider the deſcription which *Solomon* gives of a vertuous wife *Prov.* 31. will be apt to think her Province is not ſo narrow and confin'd, as the humor of the age would repreſent it. He tells us *that ſhe ſeeks wool and flax, and works diligently with her hands; that ſhe is like the merchants ſhips, and brings her food from far.* That *ſhe conſiders a field and buyes it, and with the fruit of her hands plants a vineyard, &c.* And leaſt this ſhould be imagin'd to be the Character of a mean country Dame, he addes that *her houſehold is clothed in ſcarlet*, and that *her husband ſits among the Elders of the land.* It were eaſy to give inſtances from hiſtory of the advantageous menage and active induſtry of wives, not only in ſingle perſons, but whole Nations. But nothing can be more pregnant, then that among the Romans: in the very height and flouriſh of the Empire *Auguſtus* himſelf *ſcarce wore any thing but of the Manufacture of his Wife, his ſiſter, daughters, and nieces,* as Suetonius aſſures us. Should the gay *lilies of our fields, which neither ſow nor ſpin, nor gather into barns*, be exemted from furniſhing others, and left to cloth themſelves, 'tis to be doubted they would reverſe our Saviors Parallel of *Salomons glories*, and no beggar in all his rags *would be araied like one of theſe.* Luc. 12. 27.

18. But we will be yet more kind, and impoſe only negative thrift on the wife, not to waſt and embezle

embezle her husbands eſtate, but to confine her expences within ſuch limits as that can eaſily admit; a caution which if all women had obſerved, many noble families had been preſerv'd, of which there now remains no other memorial but that they fell a ſacrifice to the profuſe vanity of a woman; and I fear this age is like to provide many more ſuch monuments for the next. Our Ladies, as if they emulated the Roman Luxury (which *Seneca* and *Pliny* deſcribe with ſo much indignation) do ſometimes wear about them the revenues of a rich family; and thoſe that cannot reach to that, ſhew how much 'tis againſt their wills they fall lower, by the vaſt variety and exceſs of ſuch things as they can poſſibly compaſſe; ſo much extravagance not only in their own dreſs, but that of their houſes and apartments, as if their vanity like the Leproſy we read of *Lev.* 14. had infected the very walls. And indeed 'tis a very ſpreading fretting one, for the furniture oft conſumes the houſe, and the houſe conſumes the land: ſo that if ſome Gentlemen were to calculate their eſtates, they might reduce all to the inventory of *Scopias* the *Theſſalian*, who profeſt his all lay only in ſuch Toies as did him no good. Women are now skilfull Chymiſts, and can quickly turn their husbands earth into Gold: but they purſue the experiment too far, make that Gold too volatile, and let it all vapor away in inſignificant (tho gaudy) trifles.

10. NOR is it ever like to be otherwiſe with thoſe

those that immoderately affect the town, that forge of vanity, which supplies a perpetual spring of new temtations. 'Tis true there are some Ladies who are necessarily engaged to be there · their husbands emploiments or fortunes have markt that out as their proper station, and where the ground of their stay is their duty, there is more reason to hope it will not betray them to ill, for temtations are most apt to assault stragglers, those that put themselves out of their proper road. And truly I see not who can more properly be said to be so, then those women whose means of subsistence lies in the Country, and yet will spend it no where but at *London*, which seems to carry something of opposition to Gods providence, who surely never caused their lot to fall, as the Psalmist speaks, *in a fair ground*, *in goodly heritages* Psalm. 16. with an intent they should never inhabit them. The 12 tribes of Israel had their peculiar Portions in Canaan assign'd them by lot *Jos.* 14. 2. and every one acquiesced in his part, dwelt in his own inheritance: had they bin impatient of living any where but in the Metropolis, had they all crouded to Jerusalem, all the rest of the land would have bin as desolate before the captivity as it was after, none would have bin left but such as *Nabuzaradan* permitted to stay *Jer.* 52. 16. *some of the poor to dresse the vines, and to till the ground.* And truly the same is like to be the fate of this nation, if this humor goes on as it has begun; which may in time prove as mischievous to the public as it daily is to private families.

20. But

20. But besides this 'tis yet farther to be consider'd, that where God gives an estate, he as the supreme landlord affixes something of duty, laies a kind of a rent charge upon it, expects it should maintain both hospitality and charity; and sure both these are fittest to be don upon the place whence the ability of them riſes. All public taxes use to be levied where the estate lies, and I know not why these which are Gods assesments upon it, should not be paid there too. When a Gentlemans land becomes profitable unto him by the sweat and labor of his poor neighbors and tenants, 'twill be a kind of *muzling of the ox* 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. if they never tast of the fruit of their pains, if they shall never have the refreshment of a good meal, or an alms; which they are not very like to meet with, if all the profits be sent up to maintain an equipage, and keep up a parade in town. But alas 'tis often not only the annual profits that go that way, not only the crop, but the soil too; those luxuries usually pray upon the vitals, eat out the very heart of an estate, and many have stay'd in the Town 'till they have nothing left in the country to retire to.

21. Now where this proceeds from the wife, what account can she give to her husband, whose easiness and indulgence (for that must be suppos'd in the case) she has so abus'd? as also to her posterity and family who for her pride must be brought low, reduc'd to a condition beneath their quality, because she affected to live above it? But she will yet worse answer it to her self, on whom she has

brought

brought not only the inconvenience but the guilt. 'Tis sure a lofty mind will feel smart enough of a fall, a diminution, much more an indigence will be sufficiently greivous to a vain and lavish humor; yet here it will farther have an additional sting, from the conscience that she ows it only to her own pride and folly, a most imbittering consideration, and such as advances the affliction beyond that of a more innocent poverty, as much as the pain of an envy enom'd arrow exceeds that of another.

22. But the saddest reckoning of all is that which she is to make to God, who has declar'd he hates robbery tho for a burnt offering to himself. How will he then detest this robbery this impoverishing of the husband, when 'tis only to make an oblation to vanity and excess? It should therefore be the care of all wives to keep themselves from a guilt for which God and man, yea and themselves also shall equally accuse them, and to keep their expences within such limits, that as bees suck but do not violate or deface the flowers, so they as joint proprietaries with the husbands, may enjoy but not devour and destroy his fortune.

23. I have now run through the duties to be perform'd unto the Husband, wherein I have not used the exactness of a casuist in curiously anatomizing every part, and shewing all the most minute particulars reducible to each head. I have only drawn out the greater lines, and insisted on those wherein Wives are most frequently deficient. I shall only add this caution, that whatever is duty to the husband

band is equally ſo, be he good or ill, the Apoſtle commands the ſubjection and fidelity, even to heathen Husbands, 1 *Pet.* 3. 12. and 'tis not now their defect, either in Piety or Morality, that can abſolve the Wife. For, beſides the inconvenience of making her duty precarious & liable to be ſubtracted upon every pretence of demerit, ſhe has by ſolemn Contract renounc'd that liberty, and in her Marriage-vow taken him for better for worſe; and it is too late *after Vows to make inquiry*, Prov. 20. 25. to ſeek to break looſe from that bond of her Soul; and how uneaſie ſoever the perverſneſs of the Husband may render it, he cannot thereby make it leſs, but more rewardable by God: for what the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the caſe of Servants, is no leſs appliable to this, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. for *this is thankworthy, if for conſcience towards God ye endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully.* Whatever duty is perform'd to Man with aſpect on God, he owns as to himſelf; ſo that how unworthy ſoever the Husband may be, the Wife cannot miſplace her obſervance, whilſt ſhe finally terminates it on that infinit Goodneſs and Majeſty to whom no love or obedience can be enough.

24. From this relation of a Wife, there ordinarily ſprings another, that of a Mother, to which there belongs a diſtinct duty, which may be branched into many ſeverals: but I ſhall at preſent only reduce them to two Heads, Love and Care. A Mother is a title of ſo much tenderneſs, that we find it borrowed by our common Dialect to ex-

preſs the moſt exuberant kindneſs; nay, even in Sacred Stile it has the ſame uſe, and is often ſet as the higheſt example our weakneſs can comprehend of the Divine Compaſſions. So that Nature ſeems ſufficiently to have ſecur'd the love of Mothers to their Children, without the aid of any poſitive Law; yet we find this, (as other Inſtincts of Nature) is ſometimes violated, and oftner perverted and applied to miſtaken purpoſes: the firſt is by a defect of Love; the other, by an imprudent exceſs of it; the defect does, I preſume, more rarely occur then the other; yet it doth ſometimes happen, and that either from a moroſe ſowrneſs of humor, or elſe from too vehement an intention on ſomething elſe.

25. Some Women have ſuch a ruggedneſs of nature, that they can love nothing; the ugly Paſſions of anger and envy, have, like *Pharaoh*'s lean Kine, eat up the more amiable, of Love and Joy. *Plato*, was wont to adviſe crabbed auſtere Tempers, to Sacrifice to the *Graces*; and ſuch as theſe had need have a great deal of Chriſtian Philoſophy, to allay and ſweeten their native Bitterneſs. But there are others that are not void of the affection of Love, but 'tis foreſtall'd by ſome other Object, and ſo diverted from their Children; and 'tis a little to be doubted, thoſe Objects which ſo divert are none of the beſt, for the Wiſdom of God has diſpoſed all duty into ſuch a Harmony and Conſent of Ports, that one interferes not with another. If we love no prohibited thing, all the regular Objects of our kind-

kindneſs will argee well enough, and one need never ſupplant another. And indeed 'tis oft obſervable, that thoſe Women who immoderatly love their own Pleaſures, do leaſt regard their Children; they look on them as Clogs to keep them within doors, and think their adverting to them, will hinder their free range abroad; thoſe are turn'd off to the care of a Nurſe or Maid, whilſt perhaps a Dog or a Monkey is thought worthy their own attendance.

26. *Plutarch* relates it as a Sarcaſm of *Ceſars* to ſome Foreigners whom he ſaw (at *Rome*) ſtrangely fond of ſuch little Animals, that he asked them whether the women in their Country had no Children; thereby intimating, how unreaſonable it was for thoſe that had, to beſtow their Careſſes on ſuch Creatures. And ſurely he would not have given a milder Reprimand to ſome of our Ladies, who not only pleaſe, but pride themſelves in thoſe little Brutes, ſhew them to all comers, when perhaps you may converſe with them divers daies, before you ſhall, by any mention of theirs, know that they have a Child.

27. To this defect of Love. many are apt to impute the Mothers transferring the Nurſing her Child to an other. I am not forward to pronounce of it, being loth to involve ſo many as I then muſt in the imputation of unnaturalneſs; I rather think it is taken up as a piece of State and Greatneſs; for no other motive, but what is founded in their Quality, could ſo univerſally prevail with all that are

of it. But ſure this is one of the vain Punctillio's wherewith this Age abounds; for whatever rank the Mother is of, the Child carries proportion to it, & there is the ſame equality between the greateſt Lady and her own Child, as is between the meaneſt Beggar and hers: though indeed if there were any condeſcenſion in it, the averſions of that ought not to out-weigh the impulſes of Nature, and the many advantages the Child may receive by taking its nouriſhment whence it derived its ſubſtance. And therefore, though I will not be too poſitive in aſſerting the neceſſity, yet I confeſs, I cannot but look with reverence upon thoſe few Perſons of Honor, who have broke through an unreaſonable Cuſtom, and preferred the good of their Children before that fantaſtic privilege of Greatneſs. And ſuch muſt in all Juſtice be acknowledged to have given a much better evidence of their love to their Children, then the others.

28. There is in *A. Gellius* his fourteenth Book, ſo fine a Diſcourſe on this ſubject, where *Favorinus* the Philoſopher is introduced, perſuading a Noble Lady, notwithſtanding the uſual Excuſes, to Nurſe her Child; that nothing beſides the length, could tempt me to omit the tranſcribing it: unleſs happily the little ſucceſs, which a Noble Perſon of the ſame Sex here concern'd, I mean the Counteſs of *Lincoln*, in the Ingenious Book wrote by her, and call'd her Nurſery, be a ſufficient ground of diſpairing to convince by any thing that can be ſaid. However, let theſe delicate ones conſider

ſider the ſevere words of the Prophet, *Lament.*4. 3. *The ſea monſters draw out the Breaſt; they give ſuck to their young ones; the Daughter of my people is become cruel like the Oſtrich in the Wilderneſs, who is hardned againſt her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear, becauſe God hath deprived her of Wiſdom, neither hath he imparted to her underſtanding.* Job, 39. 16.

29. But as there may be a fault in the defect, ſo there may be alſo in the exceſs of love. God is the only unlimited object of our love; towards all others 'tis eaſy to become inordinate, and in no inſtance more then in this of Children. The love of a parent is deſcending, and all things move moſt violently downwards; ſo that whereas that of children to their parents commonly needs a ſpur, this of the parent often needs a bridle; eſpecially that of the Mother, which (by ſtrength of feminine paſſion) does uſually exceed the love of the Father. Now to regulate this affection, ſhe is to advert to theſe two rules; firſt that ſhe hurt not her ſelf by it, and ſecondly that ſhe hurt not her childern: of the firſt ſhe is in danger if ſhe ſuffer that humane affection to ſwell beyond its banks, ſo as to come in any competition with the Divine, this is to make an Idol of her child; for every thing is ſo to us, which rivals the love of God in our hearts; and he who owns the title of a jealous God, may be provoked as well by the bowing our ſouls to a living Image, as the proſtration of our Bodies to a dead. Accordingly we oft ſee the effects of his jealouſy

louſy in this particular, the doting affection of the Mother is frequently puniſht with the untimely death of the Children; or if not with that, 'tis many times with a ſeverer ſcourge: they live (but as it was forefold to *Eli* 1. *Sam.* 2. 33.) *to grive her eies and to conſume her heart*, to be ruinous to themſelves, and afflictions to their frinds, and to force their unhappy mothers to that ſad acclamation, *Luk.* 23. 29. *Bleſſed are the wombs which bare not.*

30. And as this proves often true, when the dotage is general upon all the Children, ſo does oftner when 'tis more partial and fixt upon any one; that darling which ſhe makes the only object of her joy uſually becomes that of her ſorrow. It is an ordinary infirmity in Parents to heap all their kindneſs upon one, to the defrauding of the reſt, and too many times upon very undue motives: a little excelling in point of beauty turns the ſcales, when perhaps many more ſolid excellencies are the counterpoiſe. And ſurely this is not only unjuſt but irrational in the Parent: for all peculiarity of favour in a ſuperior, ſhould be diſpenc'd either by way of reward or encouragement; and neither of thoſe ends can take place where 'tis only the outward form that is conſider'd; for that cannot be rewardable, to which the party has contributed nothing, and the Pſalmiſt will tell us that 'tis God that hath made us and not we our ſelves *Pſalm.* 100. 2. and as little room is there for the other end, that of encouragement. For as our Saviour tells us *Mat.* 6. none can add a cubit to his ſtature,

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nor make one hair white or black: 'tis certain themſelves cannot really do either, though by the aid of artificial hypocriſy they frequently appear to do both; but thoſe are arts which neither deſerve nor want encouragement; the natural beauty muſt have its increaſe from the ſame ſource whence it derived its being; there is therefore no reaſonable account to be given why a child ſhould be preferr'd for any ſuch exterior excellency.

31. The only juſtifiable ground of partiality to children is their virtue, for to that their own choice concurs, and ſo may intitle them to reward, and 'tis alſo in their power to advance, and ſo encouragements are not caſt away upon them: nay the influences of thoſe may extend farther, and provoke a virtuous emulation in the reſt; but then the Mother muſt ſo manage it, as to evidence that 'tis no inequallity in her own inclination, but meerly the force of the others deſert; not the perſon but the goodneſs, that biaſſes her; and when vertue is known to be the only ingratiating quality, they will at once learn the way to become hers and Gods favorites. And unleſs it be upon this one deſign, 'tis a very unſafe thing for a parent to make any partial diſcrimination among children, which is ſure to tempt the more neglected both to repine at her, and envy her darlings; and oftentimes ſuch ſeeds of rancor have been by that means ſowed in children, as have been hard to eradicate in their riper years. Nor is the miſchief leſs which ſhe do's to her fondlings, who beſides that they

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are expos'd to the malice of the reſt, are uſually ſpoild by it, made inſolent and untractable, perhaps their whole lives after; for where the mothers affection is unbridled, commonly the childs will is ſo too; her fondneſs ſuperſeding that diſcipline and correction, which ſhould, as the wiſe man ſpeaks, *bow down its neck from its youth.*

32. And the like may be ſaid where the indulgence is more univerſal to all the Children, which is in one reſpect worſe then the partial, becauſe it ſpoils more, not one or two but all the brood. The doting love of a mother blinds her eyes, that ſhe cannot ſee their faults, manacles her hands that ſhe cannot chaſtiſe them, and ſo their vices are permitted to grow up with themſelves: as their joints knit and gather ſtrength, ſo do their ill habits, till at laſt they are confirm'd into an obſtinacy; ſo ſetting them in a perfect oppoſition to that pattern they ſhould imitate: for as Chriſts childhood *increaſt in wiſdom*, and the divine favour, *Luk.*2. ſo do theirs in all thoſe provoking follies, which may avert both the love of God and man. And alas what recompence can the little blandiſhments and careſſes of a mother make her children, for ſuch important, ſuch ineſtimable miſchiefs? So that ſhe that will be really kind, muſt temper her indulgence with a prudent ſeverity, or elſe ſhe eminently violates the ſecond rule, by which ſhe ſhould regulate her love, and does that to her children which *Jacob* fear'd from his father, *Gen.*27. brings a curſe upon them and not a bleſſing.

33. In-

33. Indeed the beſt way of approving their love, is by well diſcharging the other branch of their duty, that of care; without this all the moſt paſſionate raptures of kindneſs, are but an airy apparition, a fantaſtick ſcene; and will no more advantage a child, then the whole ſhambles in a picture can feed and nouriſh it. Now this care is not a temporary, momentary duty, for ſome one critical inſtant, but is to attend the child through the ſeveral ſtages of its minority, *viz.* Infancy, Childhood, and Youth. The very firſt part of their infancy is a ſeaſon only for thoſe cares which concern their bodies, providing for their careful attendance, and all other things conducing to the ſtrengthening their conſtitutions, and laying a foundation for future health and vigor; which is their intereſt not only upon a bodily, but upon an intellectual account, the good temperature of the body being a great aid towards the free operations of the mind. And therefore *Socrates* and other Philoſophers, much recommend to their diſciples the care of health, as that which freed the ſoul from many incumbrances in its purſuit of knowledge: and it was the comprehenſive prayer of the Poet, that the Gods would grant a ſound mind in a healthful Body.

34. But this health is not always the conſequent of a very nice and tender breeding, but is very oft overthrown by it; and if Ladies could but find in their hearts to try it, they would, I doubt not, find that the inuring them to moderate hardſhips,

would much more conduce to the eſtabliſhing and fortifying their conſtitutions.

35. Beyond all this, the care for their exterior is ſoon overtaken by a more important one, that of their interior; in the timeing of which there ſeems to be a very common miſtake in the World. We look upon the ſeven Years of Infancy, as the life meerly of an Animal, to be ſpent only in the Entertainments of ſenſe; and as we uſe not to yoak Calves, or back young Colts, ſo we think our Children are for a while to be left at the ſame liberty, to have no reſtraint put on any of their Paſſions. Nay many times we excite and foment them, teach Children to be angry and envious, proud and ſullen; as if we fear'd their Natural Propenſions to all theſe were too faint, and wanted the help of Inſtitutions. But ſurely this is a great and pernicious error, and this ſuppoſing Children to be ſo long Brutes, is the way to make them ſo longer. The Patrons of Atheiſm make it a moſt conſtant Topick in the diſparagement of Religion, that 'tis owed to the prejudices infuſed in the firſt Infancy. 'Twere to be wiſht, that this Objection might ſo far be complied with, that the fear of God, the love of Virtue, and hatred of Vice, might have the firſt poſſeſſion of the Soul; and they be made to moderate their Paſſions, as ſoon as they are in a capacity to have them excited and engaged.

36. And truly, if we will obſerve it, we may ſee very early dawnings of reaſon in Infants; which would ſooner come to a brightneſs, if we would be-

betimes ſet to the ſcattering of thoſe paſſions which eclipſe and darken it. A child will quickly be taught to know what pleaſes or diſpleaſes a Parent, and by a very little taſte of reward or puniſhment, will learn to do the one, and avoid the other: and when this is done, the Parent has gain'd the fundamental Point, *That of obedience*; and may ſuperſtruct on it what ſhe pleaſes, and then 'tis her fault if the Child be not by eaſie and inſenſible degrees moulded into a right form. 'Tis at firſt all one to the Child, whether he name God in an Oath or in his Prayers; but a Mother by puniſhing the one, and rewarding the other, will quickly bring him to know there is a difference, and ſo proportionably in other inſtances. As to the way of diſcipline, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that when there is occaſion for ſeverity, 'tis better to awe by actual puniſhment then terror; and never to make uſe of infinite and inviſible affrightments, the beloved methods of Nurſes and Servants, ſuch as are the menacing of Sprights and Mormo's, and leaving in the dark, that frequently make daſtardly and timerous impreſſions, which a long Age ſcarcely wears off.

37. A ſober ſenſe of things, is to be impreſſed by treatable means, and this will be done with moſt eaſe, both to the Parent and Child, the ſooner 'tis ſet upon. The will of a tender Infant, is like its Limbs, ſupple and pliant, but time confirms it, and cuſtom hardens it; ſo 'tis a cruel Indulgence to the poor Creature, to let it contract ſuch habits, which muſt coſt him ſo dear the breaking; or dearer, if

never broken. And if this early care be taken of the Infancy, 'twill much eaſe the next part, that of the Childhood; for where the Iron ſinew in the neck is broken, where the native ſtubbornneſs is ſubdued ſo early, the yoke will ſit eaſy; all ſucceeding parts of diſcipline will come with more facility and profit. The care proper to this Age, is, the inſtructing in all parts of uſeful Knowledge; of which, as the Divine for the excellency both of its nature and its end, muſt be firſt ranked, ſo ſhould it be firſt and moſt induſtriouſly cultivated, and by all endearing methods impreſt; not only on the underſtanding, but the heart. Piety and Virtue ſhould be propos'd as the moſt amiable, as well as neceſſary things, and they ſhould be invited not only to know, but love them.

38. This part of Learning is equally competent to both Sexes; and therefore, when the Sons are removed from under the Mothers tuition, and ſent to more publik places of erudition, her Province is ſtill the ſame as to her Daughters; to whom ſhe ſhould not only Preach, but exemplifie it in her own practice; no Precpts penetrating ſo much into Youth, as thoſe that are ſo inforc'd. And in order to this, I ſhould commend to Mothers, the being as much with them as they can, and taking the perſonal Inſpection of them; not to turn them off wholly to Servants, no nor yet Governeſſes; but frequently themſelves to examine how they proceed in the ſpeculative part of Knowledge, and moſt frequently exhort them to the practick.

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39. *Marcus Cato* would not let his Son learn of his Slave, as diſdaining a Child ſhould owe ſo conſiderable a benefit to ſo ſervile a perſon; and if he thought the meer teaching of Grammar, too great a charge for ſuch a one, ſurely the whole Inſtitution of Youth is a much greater; it being that on which, not only a few outward Accompliſhments, but even their Eternity depends. The great *Cornelia*, Mother of the *Gracchi*, and *Aurelia* the Mother of *Auguſtus*, thought it worth their pains to be Governeſſes. And the truth is, the Soul of a Child is a little too precious a Truſt to commit wholly to the diligence and care of a mercinary Servant; or if they happen not to want thoſe Qualifications, yet 'tis very poſſible they may Prudence, of which there is no ſmall degree requiſite to the Inſtructing of Youth, too great a remiſsneſs or ſeverity being equally deſtructive in that affair. And indeed, beſides this immediate, there are ſome other collateral Benefits conſequent to the Mothers performing that Office; 'twill bring her and her Children into an intimacy and converſation, give her an acquaintance with their ſeveral Capacities and Humors; for want of which, many Parents have erred in their Conduct, one ſort of Treatment being not fit for all Children; and the diſtinguiſhing that depending wholly on their diſcerning their particular Tempers, which cannot well be done without ſome converſe with them.

40. Beſides by this they will be witneſſes how they diſpoſe their time, that they neither looſe it by

by doing nothing, nor yet miſemploy it by doing ill. And indeed there is ſcarce any part of the Parents care more important then this, idleneſs being no farther removed from vice, then a cauſe is from its immediate effect. Therefore if children be permitted to trifle away their time, they will ſoon learn to trifle away their innocence alſo: ſo that 'tis highly neceſſary, that they be provided of a ſucceſſion of employments, that by the variety they may be inſenſibly drawn on: nay methinks, it might very well be contrived, that their recreations might ſometimes conſiſt of ſuch ingenuous exerciſes, that they may at once both play and learn.

41. There is yet another good effect of the Mothers preſence with the children (which is perhaps no leſs material then any of the former) 'tis, that by this aſſociating them with her ſelf, ſhe prevents the danger of worſe ſociety. Children if the Parents allow them not their company, are neceſſarily caſt upon that of ſervants, then which there is ſcarce a greater danger that attends youth; for beſides that that low ſort of converſe debaſes their minds, makes them mean and ſordid, it often corrupts their manners too; children uſually not receiving more peſtilent infuſions from any then ſuch. Servants that deſire to ingratiate themſelves, and having no laudable quality whereby to do it, muſt firſt endeavour to ingratiate vice to them, & then by their officious miniſtries in that, have a ready way of introducing themſelves into favour. Perhaps this will be thought to concern only the maſculine

maſculine part of children, and that the female who are commonly in a diſtinct appartment, and converſe only with their own Sex, are more ſecure. But I would not adviſe Mothers to depend too much on that, for they are no ſurer that their daughters ſhall not converſe with men, nay men of the meaner ſort too, then that their maids and attendants ſhall not do ſo; and when 'tis conſider'd, how apt thoſe are to entertain, if not to invite amours, 'tis not very probable the rooms where they quarter ſhall be inacceſſible to thoſe they affect: And it were much ſafer for children to be in the moſt publick concourſe of men, then to be witneſſes and obſervers of the private intrigues of ſuch lovers. The memories of youth are very tenacious, & if they once be tainted with any indecent thing, will be apt to recollect it, 'till at laſt perhaps they come to tranſcribe it. 'Tis therefore in this reſpect a very uſeful part of the Mothers care, to make her ſelf company to her daughters, to prevent the dangers of a more unequal and infectious converſe.

42. But if this be uſeful in childhood, 'tis no leſs then neceſſary in the next period of their time, when they arrive near the growth and age of women: then indeed the Mother ſhould not only make them her companions, but her friends, allow them ſuch a kind, yet modeſt freedom, that they may have a complacence in her company, and not be tempted to ſeek it among their inferiors; that the belief of her kindneſs may ſupplant the pretenſions of thoſe meaner Sycophants, who by little flatteries

endeavour,

endeavour to ſcrue themſelves into their good opinion, & become their confidents; then which there is nothing more miſchievous; thoſe private caballs that are held with ſuch, ſerving only to render them mutinous againſt their parents: theſe family incendiaries like thoſe in the State and Church, ſtill inculcating the one grand principle of liberty; a word ſo charming to our depraved nature, and eſpecially to youth, that they ſhould not be truſted with ſuch Lectures. Beſides thoſe intimacies are often introductions to worſe; many ſcandalous amours and unequal matches having had their riſe from them. It ſhould therefore be the buſineſs of Mothers to prevent all ſuch pernicious leagues, by pre-ingaging them in more ſafe familiarities, either with her ſelf, or ſome other, of whoſe vertue ſhe has reaſon to be confident.

43. But the moſt infallible ſecurity againſt this and all other miſchiefs, is the bringing them into an intimacy and converſation with their maker, by fixing a true ſenſe of Religion in their hearts; if that can be effectually done, 'twill ſuperſede all other expedients. She that duely conſiders ſhe is always in Gods preſence, will want no other inſpector; nor will ſhe much need monitors, who attends to the advices of her own conſcience. Neither will it only tend to the ſecuring her innocence but her reputation too; it being one part of the Chriſtian law *to abſtain from all appearance of evil.* 1 Theſ. 22. *to do things that are of good report,* Phil. 4. 8. ſo that piety is the one compleat armor

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to defend both their virtue and fame. And 'tis extremely neceſſary they ſhould be furniſht with it, at this Age eſpecially, when they do at firſt enter into the World, which we may well look on as a taking the Field; conſidering how many Aſſaults they are there like to meet with; and if they go without this Armature, they may, none knows how ſoon, be incurably wounded; of which there want not many ſad inſtances, ſome whereof might probably have been prevented, had the Parent taken care to have better fortified them.

44. And indeed 'tis not a little ſad to ſee how much this their moſt important concern is neglected. Many Mothers who are nicely curious in other parts of their Daughters breeding, are utterly inconſiderate of this; they muſt have all civil Accompliſhments, but no Chriſtian. Thoſe are excluded out of the ſcheme of Education, and by that means lye under the prejudice of being not only unneceſſary, but ungentile, below the regard of Perſons of Quality. 'Tis much to be fear'd, that this neglect toward their Children, is founded in a previous contempt of Piety in themſelves; yet I ſuppoſe 'tis often increas'd by a little Vanity they have of ſeeing them excel in ſome of thoſe exterior Qualities, which may recommend them to the humour of the World; upon the improving whereof they are ſo intent, that more material things are over-lookt; and when thoſe are acquired, the pride of ſhewing them betraies them to other Inconveniences. The Mother oft not only permits, but incites the Daugh-

ter to the opportunities of boasting her excellencies, sends her so oft abroad on that design, that at last perhaps she cannot when she would keep her at home, as I believe too many have found experimentally true. In a word, this Interval between Childhood and Majority, is the most Critical point of a Womans life, and therefore should be the most nicely and warily attended; & a Mother had need summon not only all her care and diligence, but her prudence too, well to discharge this part of her obligation.

45. I shall not insist more minutely upon Particulars: I have in the former Section spoken somewhat of what 'tis fit these young Virgins should do and avoid, and whatever by that, or by any more exact rule appears their interest or duty, 'tis the Mothers to see it be not neglected by them; but where Kindness alone will not prevail, to employ their authority too; and by a discreet mixture of each, secure their observance by both the tenures of Love and Reverence. Yet I shall a little reflect upon one particular I mention'd before, I mean that of Marrying where they have aversion, which though I there charg'd as the Crime of the Daughter, yet I must here say the Original, and more inexcusable guilt is usually in the Parents, who are sometimes such Idolaters to Wealth and Honour, that they Sacrifice their Children to them; a more barbarous Immolation then that to *Moloch*; for though that were very inhumane, yet it had this alleviation, that the pain was short: but a loathed Bed is at once an acute and

and a lingring Torment; nay, not only ſo, but a temptation too; ſo that 'tis a Tyranny of a moſt unlimited kind; extends its Effects even to Eternity; and ſure that Mother muſt have very petrified Bowels, have loſt all Natural Compaſſion, that can ſo impoſe on her Child.

46. I ſhall add no more concerning this relation of a Mother, but only one ſhort advice, That thoſe who groan under the fruſtration of their hopes, whoſe children by any ſcandalous misbehaviour become the Objects of their ſhame and grief, would ſoberly conſider,, whether it have not been ſome way owing to themſelves, either by neglect in their Education, or by their own ill Example: 'Tis uſually one, and ſomtimes both. They that upon recollection can aſſure themſelves 'tis neither, may bear the affliction with much the greater cheerfulneſs; but they that cannot, I am ſure ought to bear it with much the more patience and ſubmiſſion; take it as Gods Lecture of Repentance, and look on their Childrens faults as the product of their own. And becauſe Satisfaction is an indiſpenſible part of Repentance, they are with their utmoſt induſtry to endeavour to the repairing of thoſe Ruins they have made, by recalling thoſe to Virtue, who by their means have ſtraied from it. 'Tis true, the errors of Education, like a ſubtil Poiſon, do ſo mix with the Blood, ſo incorporate into the Humors and Manners, that 'twill be very difficult to allay their Effects; and therefore the leſs they are themſelves able to do towards it, the more earneſtly they muſt im-

portune a Higher Power. He who divided the Light from the Darkneſs, can ſeparate the Effects from the Cauſes; and as he reſtrained the natural property of Fire, in the caſe of the three Children, *Dan.*3. ſo He only can reſcue their Children from that deſtruction to which their negligence has expoſed them. But as to the influence their example has had, they may do ſomething towards the redreſs of that, by ſetting them a new Copy, making their own change ſo viſible, ſo remarkable, that they may have the very ſame means of reclaiming, which there was of ſeducing them. And this is a piece of Juſtice, which ſeems to call aloud upon many Mothers. The irregularities of Youth could hardly have grown to the preſent height, had they not received warmth and ſhelter from the practice of their Elders, which do's at once give incouragment and take of reſtraints; the Mother looſes not only her Authority, but her confidence to admoniſh or reprove. With what face can ſhe require that ſtrict and ſevere modeſty of a young Girl, which ſhe who ſhould be a Matron will not practice? or tye up the giddy wandring humor of Youth, within thoſe bounds ſhe thinks too ſtrait for her own? and how ready a retortion will even Scripture it ſelf afford for ſuch an Impoſer? *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf?* Rom. 2.21. Let it therefore be the care of all Mothers to live a perpetual Lecture to their Children, ſo to exemplifie to them all Virtue and Piety, that they may contribute ſomething to their Spiritual, as well as their Natural Life; that however they

they may at leaſt deliver their own ſouls, and not have their childrens guilt recoile upon them as the unhappy originals of it.

47. The laſt relation of a married woman is that of a Miſtriſs, the inſpection of the family being uſually her Province; and though ſhe be not ſupreme there, yet ſhe is to improve her delegated authority to the advantage of all under it; and her more conſtant reſidence gives her more opportunities of it, then the frequent avocations of the Husband will perhaps allow him. St. *Paul* ſets it as the calling; and indiſpenſible duty of the Married Women, *that they guide the houſe*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 18. not thinking it a point of greatneſs to remit the manage of all domeſtick concerns to a mercenary houſe-keeper. And indeed ſince it has been a faſhionable thing for the Maſter to reſign up his concerns to the Steward, and the Lady hers to the Governant, it has gone ill with moſt great families, whilſt theſe Officers ſerve themſelves inſtead of thoſe who employ them; raiſe fortunes on their patrons ruines, and divide the ſpoil of the family; the houſe-keeper pilfering within doors, and the Bailiff plundering without.

48. Now to the well guiding of the houſe by the Miſtreſs of it, I know no better or more comprehenſive rule, then for her to endeavour to make all that are hers to be Gods ſervants alſo; this will ſecure her of all thoſe intermedial qualifications in them in which her ſecular intereſt is concerned, their own conſciences being the beſt ſpy ſhe can

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ſet upon them, as to their truth and fidelity, and the beſt ſpur alſo to diligence and induſtry. But to the making them ſuch, there will need firſt inſtruction, and ſecondly diſcipline. It is a neceſſary part of the Rulers care, to provide that none in their family ſhould want means of neceſſary inſtruction. I do not ſay that the Miſtreſs ſhould ſet up for a catechiſt, or preacher; but that they take order they ſhould be taught by thoſe who are qualified for the employment. And that their furniſhing them with knowledge, may not ſerve only to help them to a greater number of ſtripes, *Luk.* 12.47. they are to give them the opportunities of conſecrating it by Prayer and devotion: to that end to have publick divine offices in the family; and that not by ſtarts or accidents (when a devouter gueſt is to be entertained, and laid by when a prophane) but daily and regularly; that the hours of Prayers may be fixt and conſtant as thoſe of meals, and (if it may poſſible be) as much frequented; however that towards it ſhe give both precept and example.

49. A chriſtian family ſhould be the Epitome of a Church; but alas how many among us lye under a perpetual Interdict; and yet not from the uſurpation of any forreign power, but from the irreligion of the domeſtick. One may go into divers great families, and after ſome ſtay there, not be able to ſay that the name of God was mentioned to any other purpoſe, then that of blaſphemy and execration; nor a text of Scripture, unleſs in Burleſque and prophane Drollery. And ſure we need not wonder

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at the univerſal complaint that is now made of ill ſervants, when we reflect upon this ill government of families. They that are ſuffer'd wholly to forget their duties toward God, will not always remember it towards man. Servants are not ſuch Philoſophers, that upon the bare ſtrength of a few moral inſtincts they will be virtuous; and if by a cuſtomary neglect of all things ſacred, they are once taught to look at nothing beyond this World, they will often find temptation enough here to diſcard their honeſty, as the moſt unthriving trade. And indeed when the awe of religion is quite taken off from the Vulgar, there will ſcarce any thing elſe be found to keep them within any tolerable bounds; ſo that 'tis no leſs impolitick then prophane to ſlacken that rein.

50. But it is not only the intereſt, but the duty of all that have families, to keep up the eſteem and practice of Religion in them. 'Twas one of the greateſt endearments of *Abraham* to God, *that he would command his houſhold to keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. 18. 19. And *Joſhua* undertakes no leſs for the piety of his houſhold then himſelf, *as for me and my houſe we will ſerve the Lord*, Joſ. 24. 15. And ſure 'tis but reaſonable, that where we our ſelves owe an homage, we ſhould make all our dependents acknowledge the ſame. Beſides it is a juſtice in reſpect of them; for where we entertain a ſervant, we take the whole perſon into our care and protection; and are falſe to that undertaking if we ſuffer his ſoul the moſt precious part of him to periſh; and God who keeps account even of his meaneſt

meaneſt creatures, will not patiently reſent ſuch a neglect of thoſe who bear his own Image, and were ranſomed with as great a price as their Maſters were, *for there is no reſpect of perſons with God*, Eph. 6. 9.

51. But when Piety is planted in a family, 'twill ſoon wither, if it be not kept in vigor by Diſcipline; nay indeed to have ſervants ſeemingly devout in the Oratory, and yet really licentious out of it, is but to convert ones houſe into a Theater; have a play of Religion, and keep a ſet of actors only to perſonate and repreſent it. 'Tis therefore neceſſary to inquire how they behave themſelves when they are off the Stage; whether thoſe hands which they elevate in Prayer, are at other times induſtriouſly apply'd to work; or thoſe mouths wherewith they there bleſs God, are not elſe where filled with oaths and curſes, ſcurrilities and revilings; in a word whether that form of Godlineſs be not deſign'd in commutation for ſobriety and honeſty. Indeed the governors of families ought to make a ſtrict inſpection into the manners of their ſervants, and where they find them good to affix ſome ſpecial mark of favour, by which they may both be encouraged to perſevere, and others to begin; but where they diſcern them vicious, there as eminently to diſcountenance, ſeverely to admoniſh them, and uſe all fit means for their reclaiming; and when that ſeems hopeleſs, to diſmiſs them that they may not infect the reſt. A *little leaven*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *leaveneth the whole lump*, Gal.

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the 5.ɔ. and one ill ſervant (like a periſht tooth) will be apt to corrupt his fellows. 'Tis therefore the ſame in families that it is in more publick communities, where ſeverity to the ill is mercy and protection to the reſt; and were houſes thus early weeded of all idle and vicious perſons, they would not be ſo overgrown, nor degenerate into ſuch rude wilderneſſes, as many (nay I fear moſt) great families now are.

52. But as ſervants are not to be tolerated in the neglect of their duty, ſo neither are they to be defeated of any of their due. Maſters are to give to their ſervants that which is *juſt and equal*, Col. 4. 1. And ſure 'tis but juſt and equal that they who are rational creatures ſhould not be treated with the rigor or contempt of brutes: a ſufficient and decent proviſion, both in ſickneſs and in health, is a juſt debt to them, beſides an exact performance of thoſe particular contracts upon which they were entertain'd. *Laban* had ſo much of natural juſtice, that he would not take the advantage of *Jacobs* relation to him to make him ſerve him gratis, *Becauſe thou art my brother ſhouldſt thou therefore ſerve me for nought? tell me therefore what ſhall thy wages be?* Gen. 29. 15. But alas now a days where ſervants have been told, nay expreſly articled for their wages, 'tis with many no eaſie thing to get it: nay 'tis thought by ſome Maſters an inſolence, a piece of ill manners to demand it; and when they have worn out a ſervant, they either pay him not at all, or with the ſame protraction and regret, which they do their Tailors for

the old cloathes they have caſt off. I fear there are many inſtances of this, eſpecially among great perſons, it being a received mode with too many of them to pay no debts to thoſe who are too mean to conteſt with them. But however they may ruffle it out with men, it will one day arraign them before God as moſt injurious oppreſſors; there being no crime of that kind more frequently or ſeverely branded in Scripture, then this of the detentation of the wages of the ſervant and hireling. Beſides, this example of injuſtice, wherein the ſervant is paſſive, is often tranſcrib'd by him in acts of fraud and deceit, and he is apt to think it but an equal retaliation, to break his truſt where the Maſter breaks his covenant; and when he once attempts to be his own pay maſter, 'tis not to be doubted but he will allow himſelf large uſe for the forbearance of his wages; ſo that the courſe is no leſs unprofitable to the Maſter then unjuſt and diſhonourable.

53. I am not ſure 'tis always in the wives power to prevent this or any of the former faults in the menage of the family. For her authority being but ſubordinate, if the Husband who is ſupreme ſuſpend her power, he does by that vacating her rule take off the duty conſequent to it; ſo that what I have ſaid can be obligatory to none that are ſo impeded; but to thoſe who either can do it themſelves, or perſwade their husbands to it, the omiſſion will be their ſin, all the profaneneſs and diſorder of the family will be charg'd upon their account, if it came by their default.

54. And

54. And this methinks is a conſideration that may much mortifie one uſual piece of vanity, I mean that of a multitude of ſervants. We ſhall all of us find burden enough of our own perſonal miſcarriages, and need not contrive to fetch in more weight from others. And in families 'tis generally obſervable, that the bigger they are the worſe; vice gains boldneſs by numbers, is hatcht up by the warmth of a full ſociety; and we daily ſee people venture upon thoſe enormities in conſort and in a croud, which they would not dare did they think they ſtood ſingle. Beſides the wider the Province is, the more difficult it is well to adminiſter it; and in a heap of ſervants many faults will ſcape undiſcern'd, eſpecially conſidering the common confederacy there is uſually among them, for the eluding of diſcipline: ſo that what the wiſeman ſpeaks of not deſiring a multitude of unprofitable children, I think may very well be applied to ſervants, whoſe unprofitableneſs uſually increaſes together with their number. I have now run through the ſeveral obligations conſequent to the married ſtate, wherein even upon this very curſory view, there appears ſo many particulars, that if they were all duly attended, Ladies need not be much at a loſs how to entertain themſelves, nor run abroad in a Romantick queſt after forreign divertiſements, when they have ſuch variety of engagements at home.

SECT. III.

Of Widows.

1. THE next ſtate which can ſucceed to that of Marriage is Widowhood, which though it ſuperſedes thoſe duties which were terminated meerly in the perſon of the Huſband, yet it endears thoſe which may be paid to his aſhes. *Love is ſtrong as death*, Cant. 8. 6. and therefore when it is pure and genuine cannot be extinguiſht by it, but burns like the funeral lamps of old even in vaults and charnel houſes; the conjugal love tranſplanted into the grave (as into a finer mold) improves into piety, and lays a kind of ſacred obligation upon the Widow to perform all offices of reſpect and kindneſs which his Remains are capable of.

2. Now thoſe Remains are of three ſorts, his body, his memory, and his children. The moſt proper expreſſion of her love to the firſt, is in giving it an honourable Enterrment; I mean not ſuch as may vye with the *Poland* extravagances (of which 'tis obſerved that two or three near ſucceeding funerals ruine the family) but prudently proportion'd to his quality and fortune, ſo that her zeal to his Corps may not injure a nobler relique of him, his Children. And this decency is a much better inſtance

ſtance of her kindneſs, then all thoſe Tragical Furies wherewith ſome Women ſeem tranſported towards their dead Husbands, thoſe frantick Embraces and careſſes of a Carcaſs, which betray a little too much the ſenſuality of their Love. And is is ſomething obſervable, that thoſe vehement Paſſions quickly exhauſt themſelves, and by a kind of Sympathetick Efficacy, as the Body (on which their affection was fixt) molders, ſo does that alſo, nay often it attends not thoſe leiſurely degrees of diſſolution, but by a more precipitate motion ſeems rather to vaniſh then conſume.

3. The more valuable Kindneſs therefore, is that to his Memory, endeavouring to embalm that, keep it from periſhing; and by this innocent Magick (as the Egyptians were wont by a more guilty) ſhe may converſe with the dead, repreſent him ſo to her own thoughts, that his life may ſtill be repeated to her: and as in a broken Mirror the refraction multiplies the Images, ſo by his diſſolution every hour preſents diſtinct Idea's of him; ſo that ſhe ſees him the oftner, for his being hid from her Eyes. But as they uſe not to Embalm without Odors, ſo ſhe is not only to preſerve, but perfume his Memory, render it as fragrant as ſhe can, not only to her ſelf but others; by reviving the remembrance of whatever was praiſe-worthy in him, vindicating him from all calumnies and falſe accuſations, and ſtifling (or allaying) even true ones as much ſhe can. And indeed, a Widow can no way better provide for her own honour, then by this tenderneſs of her Huſbands.

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4. Yet

4. Yet there is another expreſſion of it, inferior to none of the former, and that is, the ſetting ſuch a value upon her relation to him, as to do nothing unworthy of it. 'Twas the dying charge of *Auguſtus* to his Wife *Livia*, *Behave thy ſelf well, and remember our Marriage.* And ſhe who has been Wife to a Perſon of Honour, muſt ſo remember it as not to do any thing below her ſelf, or which he (could he have foreſeen it) ſhould juſtly have been aſhamed of.

5. The laſt Tribute ſhe can pay him is in his Children. Theſe he leaves as his Proxies to receive the kindneſs of which himſelf is uncapable; ſo that the Children of a Widow may claim a double portion of the Mothers love, one upon their Native right, as hers; the other, as a bequeſt in right of their dead Father. And indeed, ſince ſhe is to ſupply the place of both Parents, 'tis but neceſſary ſhe ſhould put on the affections of both, and to the tenderneſs of a Mother, add the care and conduct of a Father. Firſt, in a ſedulous care of their Education: and next, in the prudent managery of their Fortunes; an order that is ſometimes unhappily inverted, and Mothers are ſo concern'd to have the Eſtate proſper in their tuition, that the Children cannot; whilſt (by an unſeaſonable frugality) to ſave a little expence, they deny them the advantages of an Ingenious and Gentile Breeding, ſwell their Eſtates perhaps to a vaſt bulk, but ſo contract and narrow their minds, that they know not how to diſpoſe them to any real benefit of themſelves

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or others. And this is one of the moſt pernicious Parſimonies imaginable; a Mother by this ſeems to adopt the Fortune, and abdicate the Child, who is only made the Beaſt to bear thoſe loads of Wealth ſhe will lay on, and which ſhe evidently owns as the greateſt Treaſure, ſince in tenderneſs to that ſhe neglects him.

6. Yet ſometimes the ſame Effects ſprings from another Cauſe, and Children are ill bred, not becauſe the Mother grudges the charge, but out of a Feminine fondneſs, which permits her not to part with them to the proper places for their education; like *Jacob* to *Benjamin*, her Soul is ſo bound up in them, that ſhe cannot lend them awhile even to their own moſt neceſſary concerns; and this, though not ſo ignoble a motive as the other, is of no leſs miſchief, at leaſt to her Sons, who being by it confin'd to home, are conſequently condemn'd to be poyſon'd (if with nothing elſe, yet) with the flatteries of Servants and Tenants, who think thoſe the beſt expedient to ſecure their own ſtation. And with theſe the young Maſter or Landlord is ſo blown up, that if his Manors were the confines of the World, he can look at nothing beyond them; ſo that when at laſt he breaks looſe from his Mothers arms, and comes abroad, he expects ſcarce to find his Equals, much leſs his Betters; thinks he is ſtill to receive the ſame fawning Adorations which he was uſed to at home: and being poſſeſt with this inſolent expectation, he will ſcarce be undeceived, but at the price of many Affronts; nay, perhaps he may

may buy his experience with the loss of his life; by his ill manners draw on a Quarrel, wherein he finally perishes. That this is no impossible Supposition, some unhappy Mothers have found to their unspeakable affliction.

7. 'Tis not to be denied, but there are also dangers consequent to the breeding Children abroad, Vice having insinuated it self even into the places of Erudition, and having not only as many, but the very same Academies with Vertue and Learning; so that the extreme depravation of the times new states the Question, and we are not to consider which is best, but which is the least ill disposure of Children. And in that competition sure the home Education will be cast; for there they may suck in all the Venom, and nothing of the Antidote; they will not only be taught base things, but (as I before observ'd) by the basest Tutors, such as will add all the most sordid circumstances to the improving of a Crime. Whereas abroad they are first not like to meet with any whose interest is so much to make them Vicious: And secondly, they may (as ill as the world is) meet with many who may give them both Precepts and Examples of a better kind. Besides the Discipline used in those Communities make them know themselves; and the various sorts of Learning they may acquire, will not only prove useful divertisement (the want of which is the great spring of mischief) but will, if rightly apply'd, furnish them with Ingenious and Vertuous Principles, such as may set them above all vile and ignoble

ignoble practices. So that there ſeems a conſpiration of motives to wreſt the child from the reluctant Mother, and to perſwade her for a while to deny her ſelf that deſire of her eies, that ſo he may at laſt anſwer the more rational deſire of her heart.

8. As to the other part of her obligation, the managing of their fortune, there is the ſame rule for her as for all other perſons that have a Truſt, viz. to do as for themſelves; that is with the ſame care and diligence (if not a greater) as in her own peculiar concern, I do not ſay that ſhe ſhall confound the properry, and make it indeed her own by applying it to her particular uſe. A thing I fear which is too often done, eſpecially by the gaier ſort of widows, who to keep up their own equipage, do ſometimes incroach upon their ſons peculiar, and I wiſh even that (tho bad enough) were the only caſe wherein it were don. But tis ſometimes to make her a better prize to a ſecond husband: ſhe goes into another family, and as if ſhe were a Colony ſent out by her ſon, he muſt pay for the planting her there; indeed the oft repeating this injury, has advanc't it now into a cuſtom, and the management of the minors eſtate is reckon'd on as part of the widows fortune. But I confeſs I ſee not what there is in the title of a Mother, that can legitimate her defrauding her child, it rather envenoms the crime and adds unnaturalneſs to deceit. Beſides 'tis a prepoſterous ſort of guilt. Orphans and Widows are in Scripture link'd together as objects of Gods and good mens pitty, and of ill

mens oppreſſion, and how ill alas does civil War look among fellow ſufferers; the Widow to injure the Orphan is like that uncouth oppreſſion *Solomon* ſpeaks of *Prov.* 28. 3. *A poor man that oppreſſeth the poor, is like a ſweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such kind of rapines are as exceſſive in their degree, as prodigious in their kind; and I believe there are many inſtances of ſons, who have ſuffer'd more by the guardianſhip of their Mothers, then they could probably have don by the outrage of ſtrangers.

9. How well ſuch Mothers anſwer their obligations to their dead Husbands, I muſt leave it to their own conſciences to diſcuſs, I ſhall only offer them theſe ſteps of gradation by which to proceed. Firſt that injuſtice of any ſort is a great ſin, ſecondly that when 'tis in a matter of truſt 'tis complicated with treachery alſo, thirdly that of all truſts thoſe to the dead have alwaies bin eſteem'd the moſt ſacred: if they can find any alloy to theſe by the two remaining circumſtances, that 'tis the truſt of a Husband, and the intereſt of a child, I ſhall confeſs them very ſubtil caſuiſts.

10. I have hitherto ſpoke of what the widow ows to her dead husband; but there is alſo ſomewhat of pecular obligation in relation to her ſelf. God who has plac'd us in this World to purſue the intereſts of a better, directs all the ſignal acts of his providence to that end, and intends we ſhould ſo interpret them. So that every great change that occurs, is deſign'd either to recall us from a wrong way, or to quicken our pace in the right, and a

widow

widow may more then conjecture that when God takes away the mate of her boſome, reduces her to a ſolitude, he does by it ſound a retreat from the lighter jollities and gaieties of the world. And as in compliance with civil cuſtom ſhe immures her ſelf, ſits in darkneſs for a while; ſo ſhe ſhould put on a more retir'd temper of mind, a more ſtrict and ſevere behavior, and that not to be caſt off with her veil, but to be the conſtant dreſs of her widowhood. Indeed that ſtate as is requires a great ſobriety and piety, ſo it affords many advantages towards it, as the Apoſtle tells us, *that ſhe who is married careth for the things of the World how ſhe may pleaſe her husband*, 1 Cor. 7. 34. There are many things which are but the due compliances of a wife, which yet are great avocations, and interrupters of a ſtrict devotion; when ſhe is manumitted from that ſubjection, when ſhe has leſs of *Martha's care of ſerving*, ſhe is then at liberty to chuſe *Mary's part*, Luk. 10. 42. She has her time and her fortune at her own command, and conſequently may much more abound in the works both of piety and charity. We find God himſelf retrencht the wives power of binding her own ſoul, *Num.* 30. Her vows were totally inſignificant without her husbands confirmation; but the widow might devote her ſelf to what degree ſhe pleas'd, her piety has no reſtraint from any other inconſiſtent obligation, but may ſwell as high as it can. Thoſe hours which were before her husbands right, ſeem now to devolve on God the grand proprietor

of our time: that diſcourſe & free converſe where-with ſhe entertain'd him, ſhe may now convert into colloquies and ſpiritual entercourſe with her maker; and that love which was only human before, by the change of its object acquires a ſublimity, is exalted into divine, from loial duty and conjugal affection becomes the eternal work and happineſs of Angels, the ardor of a Cherubim. Thus may ſhe in a higher ſenſe verify *Sampſons* riddle, *Jud.* 14. 14. *Fetch honey out of a Carkaſſe*, make her husbands Aſhes (like thoſe of the heifer under the law, *Heb.* 9. 13.) *her Purification*, his corruption may help to put on incorruption, and her loſs of a temporary comfort may inſtate her in an eternal.

11. *AND* as her ſelf ſo her fortune may alſo be conſecrated; and indeed if ſhe be, that will alſo. If ſhe have made an eſcape out of *Ægypt*, there ſhall not an hoof be left behind her, *Ex.* 10. 26. No part of her poſſeſſions will be aſſign'd to vanity and exceſs. She who hath really devoted her ſelf to piety, *faſted and prayed* with *Anna*, Luke 2. 37. will alſo be *full of good works and alms-deeds* with *Tabitha*, Act. 9. 36. Thus ſhe may be a mother when ſhe ceaſes to bear; and though ſhe no more increaſe one Family, ſhe may ſupport many; and certainly the fertility of the womb, is not ſo valuable as this of the bowels. Fruitfulneſs can be but a happineſs, Compaſſion is a vertue. Nay indeed 'tis a greater and more certain happineſs: a child is not brought forth but with pangs & anguiſh

anguiſh, but a work of mercy is produc'd not only with eaſe, but delight. Beſides, ſhe that bears a Child, knows not whether it may prove a Bleſſing or a Curſe; but Charity gives certain title to a Bleſſing, and engages the moſt ſolvent Paymaſter, even God himſelf, who owns all ſuch disburſments as a loan to him. *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, Prov. 19. 17.

12. There was in the Primitive Times an Eccleſiaſtcal Order of widows, which St. *Paul* mentions, 1 *Tim.* 5. whoſe whole Miniſtry was devoted to Charity. They were indeed of the poorer ſort, fit rather to receive then give Alms; yet the leſs they could do with their Purſes, the more was required of their Perſons, the humbler offices of *waſhing the Saints feet*, the careful task of *bringing up Children*, and a diligent *attendance on every good work*. And ſure there is parity of Reaſon, that thoſe who upon the ſcore of their Wealth, exempt themſelves from thoſe Laborious Services, ſhould commute for itby more Liberal Alms. In the warmth and zeal of Chriſtianity, Women of the higheſt Quality performed both ſorts of Charity, forgot their Greatneſs in their condeſcenſions, yet aſſum'd it again in their bounty; founded Hoſpitals, and yet with a *labor of love*, as the Apoſtle ſtiles it, *Heb.* 6. 10. diſdain'd not ſometimes to ſerve in them. But theſe are Examples not like to be tranſcrib'd in our daies. Greatneſs is now grown to ſuch an unweildineſs, that it cannot ſtoop, tho

tho to the moſt Chriſtian Offices, and yet can as little ſoar up in any Munificent Charities; it ſtands like *Nebuchadnezzars* Golden Image, a vaſt Bulk only to be ador'd.

13. Now certainly, if any Women be qualified to avert this reproach, it muſt be the Dowagers of great Families and Fortunes, they have none to controul their Viſits to the ſick and afflicted, or to reſent a diſparagement from their Humility, neither have they an account to give of their poſſeſſions to any but God and themſelves; to him ſure they can bring none ſo like to procure them the Eulogy of *well done thou good and faithful Servant*, Matth. 25. 21. as a Catalogue of their Alms. Nor indeed can they any other way diſpoſe their Fortune ſo much to their own contentment; they may indeed cloy and ſatiate their ſenſes, make proviſion for the fleſh; but that no way ſatisfies their reaſon, much leſs their Conſcience. The Soul which is the ſuperior part, it quite left out in that diſtribution, nothing is communicated to it but the guilt of thoſe dear bought Exceſſes. The only way it has to be a ſharer in their Wealth, is by a charitable diſpenſing. The Poor are its Proxies as well as Gods, and tho in all other reſpects we may ſay to the Soul, as the *Pſalmiſt* does to God, *Pſal*, 16. 2. *my goods extend not to thee*: yet by this way, it becomes not only a partaker, but the chief proprietor, and all is laid out for its uſe. The harboring an out-caſt, builds it *an everlaſting habitation*, *Luk.* 16. 9. the clothing the naked, arrays it in *pure white*

white linen, Rev. 19. 8. and the feeding the hungry, makes it a gueſt *at the ſupper of the Lamb*, v. 8. Nay, it gains not only an indefeaſible title to theſe happy Reverſions, but it has a great deal in preſent poſſeſſion, a huge rational Complacence in the right applying of Wealth, & doing that with it for which 'twas deſign'd; yet more, it gives a ſenſitive delight, nothing being more agreeable to human nature, then the doing good to its own kind. A ſeaſonable Alms leaves a greater exultation and tranſport in the Giver, then it can ordinarily raiſe in the Receiver, ſo exemplifying the Maxim of our Bleſſed Lord, that it is a *more bleſſed thing to give then to receive*, Act. 20. 35. This indeed is a way to elude the ſevere denuntiation of the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 5. 6. *A Widow that liveth in this pleaſure, is dead whileſt ſhe liveth*; but on the contrary, ſhall live when ſhe dies; when ſhe reſigns her Breath, ſhal improve her being; the Prayers of the Poor, like a benign gale, ſhall aſſiſt her flight to the Region of Bliſs; and ſhe who has here cheriſh'd the afflicted Members, ſhall there be indiſſolubly united to their Glorious Head.

14. And now methinks Widow-hood, under this aſpect, is quite transform'd, is not ſo forlorn, ſo deſolate an eſtate as 'tis uſually eſteem'd. And would all Widows uſe but this expedient, thus devote themſelves to Piety and Charity, it would, like the healing Tree, *Exod.* 15. 25. ſweeten theſe Waters of *Marah*, render the condition not only ſupportable, but pleaſant; and they would not need to make ſuch affrighted, ſuch diſadvantageous eſcapes,

eſcapes, as many do, from it. 'Tis true, the Apoſtles affirmation is unqueſtionable, that *the wife, when her husband is dead is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will*, 1 Cor. 7. 39. But the advice he ſubjoins is authentic too, *ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide.* She that may ſolace her ſelf in the Society, in the Love of her God, makes an ignoble deſcent to Human Embraces; ſhe that may purchaſe Heaven with her Wealth, buys a very dear Bargain of the beſt Husband on Earth; nay indeed, upon a meer ſecular account, it ſeems not very prudent to relinquiſh both Liberty and Property, to Eſpouſe at the beſt a Subjection, but perhaps a Slavery; it a little reſembles the mad Frolicks of freed Gally-ſlaves, who play away their Liberty as ſoon as they regain it.

15. Marriage is ſo great an adventure, that once ſeems enough for the whole life; for whether they have bin proſperous or adverſe in the firſt, it does almoſt diſcourage a ſecond attempt. She that has had a good Husband, may be ſuppoſ'd to have his Idea ſo fixt in her Heart, that it will be hard to introduce any new Form: nay farther, ſhe may very reaſonably doubt, that in this common dearth of Virtu, two good Husbands will ſcarce fall to one Womans ſhare, and an ill one will become more intolerable to her, by the reflections ſhe will be apt to make on the better. On the other ſide, if ſhe have had a bad, the ſmart ſure cannot but remain after the rod is taken off; the memory of what ſhe has ſuffer'd ſhould, methinks, be a competent

caution againſt new adventures. Yet experience ſhews us that women (tho the weaker ſex) have commonly fortitude enough to encounter and baffle all theſe conſiderations. It is not therefore to be expected that many will by any thing that hath or can be ſaid be diverted from remarrying: and indeed ſhe that does not preſerve her widowhood upon the accounts forementioned, may perhaps better relinquiſh it. Sr. *Paul* we ſee adviſes that thoſe *Widows* who found no better employment *then going from houſe to houſe*, that grew by their vacancy to *be tatlers and buſy bodies*, 1. Tim. 5. 13. ſhould marry again; it being the beſt way to fix theſe wandring planets, to find them buſineſs of their own at home, that ſo they may not ramble abroad to intermeddle with that of others. And the truth is they that cannot brook the retiredneſs and gravity which becomes a widow, had better put themſelves in a ſtate that leſs requires it; and if they reſolve not to conform their minds to their condition, to bring their condition to their minds; but in the doing that there will be ſome cautions very neceſſary to be Obſerv'd. I ſhall reduce them to two, the one relating to the times, the other to the equality of the match.

16. Firſt in reſpect of time, common decency requires that there be a conſiderable interval between the parting with one husband and the chuſing another. This has bin ſo much obſerved by nations that were at all civiliz'd, that

we find *Numa* made it a law, that no widow ſhould marry under 10. months, and if any did ſhe was to ſacrifice as for the expiation of a crime; and this continued in force many ages after, inſomuch that when upon reaſons of State *Auguſtus* found it uſeful to marry his ſiſter *Octavia* to *Antonius*, nothing leſs then a decree of the Senate could licenſe the anticipating the time; ſo jealous obſervers were they of this point of Civility, that they thought the whole ſtate was concern'd in the violation. 'Tis true we have no law in the caſe, but we have ſomewhat of cuſtom, I know not how long we ſhall have, ſince the frequent breaches of it threaten quite to cancel it: yet a woman that is tender of her honor will ſcarce give her example towards the reſcinding it. The wounds of grief are ſeldom heal'd by any hand but that of time, and therefore too ſudden a cure ſhews the hurt pierc'd not deep; and ſhe that can make her mourning veil an optic to draw a new lover neerer to her ſight, gives cauſe to ſuſpect the ſables were all without.

17. The next thing conſiderable is the equality of the match. Marriage is ſo cloſe a link, that to have it eaſy 'tis good to have the parties as even proportion'd as may be. And firſt in reſpect of quality and fortune, 'tis to be wiſht there ſhould be no eminent diſproportion. Thoſe that meet moſt upon a level, are leaſt ſubject to thoſe upbraidings that often attend a great deſcent of either party; it is therefore no prudent motive, by

by which ſome Widows are ſway'd, who marry only for a great title; who often do not meet with ſo much of obeiſance from ſtrangers, as they do with contempt from their husbands and his relations. There have been many examples of Lords, who have uſed rich, but inferior, widows like ſpunges, ſqueez'd them to fill themſelves again only with the air of a big name. On the other ſide for a woman to marry very meanly and too much below her ſelf, is rather worſe; theſe kind of matches are ordinarily made in a tranſport of paſſion, and when that abates and leaves her to ſober reflections, ſhe will probably be ſo angry with her ſelf, that ſhe will ſcarce be well pleas'd with her husband. A ſtate of ſubjection is a little ſweetned by the worth and dignity of the ruler: for as it is more honorable, ſo 'tis alſo more eaſie, the ſerviler ſpirits being of all others the moſt imperious in command. And ſure 'twill not a little grate a woman of honor, to think ſhe has made ſuch a one her Maſter, who perhaps would before have thought it a preferment to have been her ſervant. Nay farther, ſuch marriages have commonly an ill reflection on the modeſty of the Woman, it being uſually preſum'd that where the diſtance was ſo great, as to diſcourage ſuch an attempt on this part, there was ſome invitation on hers. So that upon all accounts ſhe is very forlorn who thus diſpoſes of her ſelf: yet 'tis too well known ſuch matches have oft been made, and the ſame levity and inconſideration may betray others to

it; and therefore 'tis their concern well to ballaſt their minds, and to provide that their paſſion never get the aſcendant over their reaſon.

18. Another very neceſſary equality is that of their judgment as to Religion. I do not mean that they are to catechize each other to every minute ſpeculative point; but that they be of the ſame profeſſion, ſo as to joyn together in the worſhip of God. It is ſure very uncomfortable that thoſe who have ſo cloſely combin'd all their other intereſts, ſhould be diſunited in the greateſt; that one Church cannot hold them, whom one houſe, one bed does; and that Religion which is in it ſelf the moſt uniting thing, ſhould be the only diſagreement between them. I know 'tis oft made a compact in ſuch matches, that neither ſhall impoſe their opinion upon the other: yet I doubt 'tis ſeldom kept, unleſs it be by thoſe whoſe careleſneſs of all Religion abates their zeal to any one. But where they have any earneſtneſs in their way, eſpecially where one party thinks the other in a damnable error, will ſcarce be poſſible to refrain endeavoring to reduce them; and that endeavor begets diſputes, thoſe diſputes heats, thoſe heats diſguſts, and thoſe diſguſts perhaps end in averſion; ſo that at laſt their affections grow as unreconcilable as their opinions, and their religious jars draw on domeſtick. Beſides if none of theſe perſonal debates happen, yet the education of the children will be matter of diſpute; the one parent will ſtill be countermining the other, each ſeeking

to

to recover the others proſelytes. Nay it introduces faction into the inferior parts of the family too: the ſervants according to their different perſwaſions bandy into leagues and parties; ſo that it endangers, if not utterly deſtroys all concord in families; and all this train of miſchiefs ſhould methinks be a competent prejudice againſt ſuch matches.

There is yet a third particular wherein any great diſproportion is much to be avoided, and that is in Years. The humors of youth and age differ ſo widely, that there had need be a great deal of skill to compoſe the diſcord into a harmony. When a young Woman marries an old man, there are commonly jealouſies on the one part and loathings on the other, and if there be not an eminent degree of diſcretion in one or both, there will be perpetual diſagreements. But this is a caſe that does not often happen among thoſe I now ſpeak to: for tho the avarice of Parents ſometimes forces maids upon ſuch matches, yet widows, who are their own chooſers, ſeldom make ſuch elections. The inequality among them commonly falls on the other ſide, and old women marry young men. Indeed any marriage is in ſuch a folly and dotage, they who muſt ſuddenly make their beds in the duſt, what ſhould they think of a nuptial couch? And to ſuch the anſwer of the Philoſopher is oppoſite, who being demanded what was the fitteſt time for marrying, replied, for the young not yet, for the old not at all

20. But

20. But this dotage becomes perfect frenzy and madneſs when they chuſe young husbands: this is an accumulation of abſurdities and contradictions. The husband and the Wife are but one perſon; and yet at once young and old, freſh and wither'd. 'Tis a reverſing the decrees of nature, and therefore 'twas no ill anſwer which *Dionyſius* the Tyrant gave his mother, who in her age deſign'd ſuch a match, that tho by his regal power he could diſpence with poſitive laws, yet he could not abrogate thoſe of nature; or make it fit for her an old woman to marry an old man. 'Tis indeed an inverſion of reaſons, a confounding the Kalendar, making a mungrel moneth of *May* and *December*; and the conjunction proves as fatal as it is prodigious; it being ſcarce ever ſeen that ſuch a match proves tolerably happy. And indeed 'tis not imaginable how it ſhould, for firſt 'tis to be preſum'd that ſhe that marries ſo muſt marry meanly, no young man who does not need her fortune will take her perſon. For tho ſome have the humor to give great rates for inanimate antiquities, yet none will take the living *gratis*. Next ſhe never miſſes to be hated by him ſhe marries: he looks on her as his rack & torment, thinks himſelf under the lingring torture devis'd by *Mezentius*, a living body tied to a dead. Nor muſt ſhe think to cure this by any the little adulteries of art: ſhe may buy beauty, and yet can never make it her own; may paint, yet never be fair. 'Tis like enameling a mud wall, the courſneſs of the ground will

will ſpoil the varniſh; and the greateſt exquiſitneſs of dreſs ſerves but to illuſtrate her native blemiſhes. So that all ſhe gains by this is to make him ſcorn as well as abhor her.

21. Indeed there is nothing can be more ridiculous, then an old Woman gaily ſet out; and it was not unaptly ſaid of *Diogenes* to ſuch a one, If this decking be for the living, you are deceived; if for the dead, make haſt to them: and I doubt many young Husbands will be ready to ſay as much. Nay becauſe death comes not quick enough to part them, there is few have patience to attend its loitering pace: the man bids adieu to the Wife tho not to her fortune, takes that to maintain his luxuries elſe where, allows her ſome little annuity, and makes her a penſioner to her own eſtate. So that he has his deſign, but ſhe none of hers: he married for her fortune, and he has it; ſhe for his perſon, and has it not: and which is worſe buies her defeat with the loſs of all; he commonly leaving her as empty of mony as he found her of wit.

22. And truly this is a condition deplorable enough, and yet uſually fails even of that comfort which is the laſt reſerve of the miſerable, I mean Pitty. 'Tis the Wiſe man's queſtion, *Eccleſ.* 12. 13. *Who will pitty a charmer that is bitten with a Serpent?* He might have preſum'd leſs on his skill, and kept himſelf at a ſafer diſtance; and ſure the like may be ſaid of her. Alas, what are her feeble charms, that ſhe ſhould expect by them to fix the giddy

giddy appetites of youth; And ſince ſhe could ſo preſume without ſenſe, none will regret that ſhe could be convinc'd by ſmart. Beſides, this is a caſe wherein there have bin a multitude of unhappy Preſidents which might have caution'd her. He that accidentally falls down an undiſcoverd precipice is compaſſionated for his diſaſter; but he that ſtands a great while on the brink of it, looks down and ſees the bottom ſtrew'd with the mangled carcaſſes of many that have thence fallen; if he ſhall deliberately caſt himſelf into their company, the blame quite extinguiſhes the pitty; he may aſtoniſh, but not melt the beholders. And truly ſhe who caſts her ſelf away in ſuch a match, betraies not leſs but more wilfullneſs. How many ruins of unhappy women preſent themſelves to her, like the wrecks of old veſſels, all ſplit upon this rock? And if ſhe will needs ſteer her courſe purpoſely to do the ſame, none ought to grudg her the ſhipwreck ſhe ſo courts.

23. Nor has ſhe only this negative diſcomfort to be depriv'd of pitty, but ſhe is loaded with cenſures and reproch. The World is apt enough to malicious errors, to fix blame where there is none, but 'tis ſeldom guilty of the charitative, does not overlook the ſmalleſt appearance of evil, but generally puts the worſt conſtruction on any act, that it will with any probability bear; and according to that meaſure women in this condition can expect no very mild deſcants on them. Indeed ſuch matches are ſo deſtitute of any rational

tional Plea, that 'tis hard to derive them from any other motive then the ſenſitive. What the common conjectures are in that caſe, is as needleſs as it is unhandſom to declare: I will not ſay how true they are, but if they be, it adds another reaſon to the former, why ſuch Marriages are ſo improſperous. All diſtortions in Nature are uſually ominous; and ſure ſuch preternatural heats in Age may very well be reckon'd as diſmal Preſages, and very certain ones too, ſince they create the ruine they foretel. And truly 'tis not only juſt, but convenient, that ſuch Motives ſhould be attended with ſuch Conſequences; that the Bitterneſs of the one may occaſion ſome reflexion on the Sordidneſs of the other. 'Tis but kindly, that ſuch an Alhallontide Spring ſhould meet with Froſts, and the unpleſantneſs of the Event chaſtiſe the uglineſs of the Deſign; and therefore I think thoſe that are conſcious of the one, ſhould be ſo far from murmuring, that they ſhould be very thankful for the other: think it Gods diſcipline to bring them again to their Wits, and not repine at that ſmart which themſelves have made neceſſary.

24. And now I wiſh all the Ancienter Widows, would ſeriouſly weigh how much 'tis their Intereſt not to ſever thoſe two Epithets; that of Ancient they cannot put off, it daily grows upon them; and that of Widow is ſure a more proportionable adjunct to it, then that of Wife; eſpecially when it is to one to whom her Age might have made her Mother. There is a Veneration due to Age, if it

be ſuch as diſowns not it ſelf: *The hoary head*, ſays *Solomon, is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteouſneſs*, Prov. 16. 32. but when it will mix it ſelf with Youth, it is diſclaim'd by both, becomes the ſhame of the Old, and the ſcorn of the Young. What a ſtrange fury is it then which poſſeſſes ſuch Women, that when they may diſpoſe their Fortunes to thoſe Advantageous Deſigns before mention'd, they ſhould only buy with them ſo undecent, ſo ridiculous a ſlavery? that when they may keep up the reputation of Modeſty and Prudence, they ſhould expoſe themſelves to an Univerſal Contemt for the want of both; and that they who might have had a Reverence, put themſelves even out of the capacity of bare Compaſſion.

25. This is ſo high a Frenzy, as ſure cannot happen in an inſtant; it muſt have ſome preparatory degrees, ſome rooting in the conſtitution and habit of the mind: Such Widows have ſure ſome lightneſs of humor, before they can be ſo giddy in their Brains, and therefore theſe that will ſecure themſelves from the Effect, muſt ſubſtract the Cauſe; if they will ſtill be wiſhing themſelves young, 'tis odds but within a while they will perſuade themſelves they are ſo. Let them therefore content themſelves to be old, and as Faſhions are varied with Times, ſo let them put on the Ornaments proper to their Seaſon; which are Piety, Gravity, and Prudence. Theſe will be not only their Ornament, but their Armor too; this will gain them ſuch a Reverence, that will make it as im-

improbable they ſhould be aſſaulted, as impoſſible they ſhould aſſault. For I think one may ſafely ſay, It is the want of one or all thoſe, which betrays Women to ſuch Marriages.

26. And indeed it may be a matter of Caution, even to the younger Widows, not to let themſelves too much looſe to a light frolick humor, which perhaps they will not be able to put off, when it is moſt neceſſary they ſhould. It will not much invite a ſober Man to marry them while they are young; and if it continue with them till they are old, it may (as Natural Motions uſe) grow more violent towards its end: precipitate them into that ruinous Folly we have before conſider'd. Yet, ſhould they happen to ſcape that, ſhould it not force them from their Widowhood, it will ſure very ill agree with it: for how prepoſterous is it for an Old Woman to delight in Gauds and Trifles, ſuch as were fitter to entertain her Grand-children? to read Romances with ſpectacles, and be at Masks and Dancings, when ſhe is fit only to act the Anticles? Theſe are contradictions to Nature: the tearing off her Marks, and where ſhe has writ fifty or ſixty, to leſſen (beyond the proportion of the unjuſt Steward) and write ſixteen. And thoſe who thus manage their Widowhood, have more reaſon to bewail it at laſt then at firſt, as having more experimentally found the miſchief of being left to their own Guidance. It will therefore concern them all to put themſelves under a ſafer conduct, by an aſſiduous Devotion to render themſelves up to the

leading of the one infallible Guide, who, if he be not a *covering of the eyes*, Gen. 20. 16. to preclude all ſecond Choices, may yet be *a light to them* for diſcerning who are fit to be choſen; that if they ſee fit to uſe their liberty and Marry, they may yet take the Apoſtles reſtriction with it, 1 *Cor.* 7. 40. that *it be only in the Lord.* Upon ſuch ſober Motives, and with ſuch due Circumſtances as may approve it to Him, and render it capable of his Benediction.

The Cloſe.

I HAVE now gone through both Parts of the propos'd Method. The former has preſented thoſe Qualifications which are equally neceſſary to every Woman: Theſe, as a Root, ſend ſap and vigour to the diſtinct Branches, animate & impregnate the ſeveral ſucceſſive States through which ſhe is to paſs. He that hath pure Ore of Bullion, may caſt it into what Form beſt fits his uſe, nay may tranſlate it from one to another; and ſhe who has that Mine of Virtues, may furniſh out any Condition; her being good in an abſolute conſideration, will certainly make her ſo in a relative. On the other ſide, ſhe who has not ſuch a Stock, cannot keep up the Honor of any State; like corrupted Liquor, empty it from one Veſſel to another

another, it ſtill infects and contaminates all. And this is the cauſe that Women are alike complain'd of under all Forms, becauſe ſo many want this Fundamental Vertue: were there more good Women, there would be more modeſt Virgins, loyal and obedient Wives, and ſober Widows.

2. I muſt therefore intreat thoſe who will look on this Tract, not only to ſingle out that part which bears their own inſcription, but that they think themſelves no leſs concern'd in that which relates indefinitely to their Sex; endeavor to poſſeſs themſelves of thoſe Excellencies, which ſhould be as univerſal as their Kind: and when they are ſo ſtor'd with Matter, they may leave Providence to diverſifie the Shape, and to aſſign them their Scene of Action.

3. And now, would God it were as eaſie to perſwade, as it is to propoſe; and that this Diſcourſe may not be taken only as a Gazet for its newneſs, and diſcarded as ſoon as read; but that it may at leſt advance to the honor of an Almanack, be allowed one Year ere it be out of date: and in that time, if frequently and ſeriouſly conſulted, it may perhaps awaken ſome Ladies from their ſtupid Dreams, convince them that they were ſent into the World for nobler purpoſes, then only to make a little Glittering in it; like a Comet, to give a blaze, and then diſappear. And truly, if it may Operate but ſo far as to give them an effective ſence of that, I ſhall think it has done them a conſiderable Service They may, I am ſure, from that Principle, decuce

all neceſſary Conſequences, and I wiſh they would but take the pains to draw the Corollaries; for thoſe Inductions they make to themſelves, would be much more efficacious then thoſe which are drawn to their hands. Propriety is a great endearment, we love to be Proſelytes to our ſelves; and People oft reſiſt others Reaſons, who would upon meer partiality pay reverence to their own.

4. But beſides this, there would be another Advantage, if they could be but got to a cuſtom of conſidering, by it they might inſenſibly undermine the grand Inſtrument of their ruin. That careleſs incogitancy, ſo remarkably frequent among all, and not leaſt among Perſons of Quality, is the ſource of innumerable Miſchiefs; 'tis the *Delilah*, that at once lulls and betrays them; it keeps them in a perpetual Sleep, binds up their Faculties, ſo that, though they are not extinct, yet they become uſeleſs. *Plato* uſed to ſay, *That a man aſleep was good for nothing:* and 'tis certainly no leſs true of this Moral drouſineſs then the Natural. And as in Sleep the fancy only is in motion, ſo theſe inconſiderate Perſons, they rather dream then diſcourſe, entertain little trifling Images of things, which are preſented by their Senſes, but know not how to converſe with their Reaſon. So that in this drouſy ſtate, all temtations come on them with the ſame advantage, with that of a *thief in the night*; a Phraſe by which the Scripture expreſſes the moſt inevitable unforeſeen danger, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 2. We read in *Judges*, how eaſily *Laſh* became a prey to a handſul

ful of Men, meerly becauſe of this ſupine negligent humor of the Inhabitants, which had cut them off from all intercourſe with any who might have ſuccor'd them, *Jud.* 18. 27. 28. and certainly it gives no leſs opportunity to our Spiritual Aſſailants, leaves us naked and unguarded to receive all their Impreſſions. How prodigious a thing is it then, that this ſtate of dulneſs and danger ſhould be affectedly choſen? yet we ſee it too often is, even by thoſe whoſe Qualities & Education fit them for more Ingenious Elections; nay, which is yet more riddle, that very aptneſs diſenables, ſets them above what it prepares them for. Labor is lookt on as utterly incompatible with Greatneſs, and Conſideration is lookt on as a labor of the mind; and there are ſome Ladies, who ſeem to reckon it as their Prerogative, to be exemted from both; will no more apply their Underſtandings to any ſerious Diſcuſſion, then their Hands to the Spindle and Diſtaff; the one they think pedantic, as the other is mean. In the mean time, by what ſtrange meaſures do they proceed? they look on Idiots as the moſt deplorable of Creatures, becauſe they want reaſon, and yet make it their own excellence and preheminence, to want the uſe of it; which is indeed ſo much worſe then to want the thing, as ſloth is worſe then poverty, a moral defect then a natural. But we may ſee by this, how much civil and ſacred Eſtimates differ: for we find the *Bereans* commended, not only as more diligent, but as more noble too, *Acts* 17. 11. becauſe they attentively *conſider'd*

der'd, and ſtrictly examin'd the *Doctrine preach'd to them.* By which they may diſcern, that in Gods Court of Honor, a ſtupid Oſcitancy is no ennobling Quality, however it comes to be thought ſo in theirs.

5. And if this one point might be gain'd, if they would but ſo far actuate their Reaſon, as deliberatly and duly to weigh their Intereſt, they would find that ſo ſtrictly engaging them to all that is Vertuous; that they muſt have a very invincible reſolution for ruine, if that cannot perſwade them: and I hope all women are not Medea's, whom the Poet brings in avowing the horridneſs of that fact, which yet ſhe reſolv'd to execute. They are generally rather timorous, and apt to ſtart at the apprehenſion of danger; let them but ſee a ſerpent tho at a great diſtance, they will need no homilies or lectures to be perſwaded to fly it. And ſure did they but cleerly diſcern what a ſting there is in thoſe vicious follies they embrace, their fear would make them quit their hold; put them in ſuch a trembling, as would like that of Belſhazzars, ſlacken their joints, and make thoſe things drop from them, which before they moſt tenaciouſly graſped. For indeed in ſin there is a conſpiration of all that can be dreadful to a rational being, ſo that one may give its compendium by the very reverſe of that which the Apoſtle gives of Godlineſs, 1. Tim. 4. 8. for as the one *has the promiſes*, ſo the other has the curſes *of this life, and of that to come.*

6. In

6. In this life every deprav'd act (much more habit) has a black shadow attending it; it casts one inward upon the conscience in uncomfortable upbraidings and regrets. 'Tis true indeed some have the art to disguise that to themselves by casting a yet darker over it; suppressing all those reluctings by an industrious stupefaction; making their souls so perfect night, that they cannot see those Black images their consciences represent. But as this renders their condition but the more wretched; so neither can they blind oth rs tho they do themselves. Vice casts a dark shadow outwards too, not such as many conceal, but betray its self: and as the evening shadows increase in dimension, grow to a monstrosity and disproportion; so the longer any ill habit is continued, the more visible, the more deform'd it appears, draws more observation and more censure.

7. 'Twere indeed endless to reckon up the temporal evils to which it exposes its votaries; immodesty destroys their fame, a vain prodigality their fortune, anger makes them mad, pride hateful, levity renders them despis'd, obstinacy desperate, and irreligion is a complication of all these, fills up their measure both of guilt and wretchedness; so that had vertue no other advocate, her very Antagonist would plead for her: the miserable consequences of vice, would like the flames of *Sodom* send all considering persons to that little *Zoar*, which how despicable soever it may have appear'd before, cannot but look

invitingly when safety is inscribed on its gates.

8. But it must infinitely more do so if they please to open a visto into the other World, make use of divine perspectives to discern those distant objects which their grosser senses do here intercept. There they may see the dismal Catastrophe of their Comedies, the miserable inversion of all unlawful and unbounded pleasures: there that Propheric menace concerning *Babylon* which we find, *Rev.* 18. 7. will be literally verified upon every unhappy soul, *According as she exalted her self and lived delicately, so much the more tribulation give her*; the torment of that life will bear proportion to the pride and luxuries of this. It will therefore be necessary for those who here wallow in pleasures, to confront to them the remembrance of those rivers of Brimstone, and ask themselves the Prophets question, *who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* We find *Esay*, when he denounces but temporal judgments against the Daughters of *Zion*, he exactly pursues the Antithesis, and to every part of their effeminate delicacy he opposes the direct contrary hardship, instead of *sweet smels there shall be a stink*, *instead of a girdle a rent*, *instead of well set hair baldness*, *instead of a stomacher*, *a girding with sackcloth*, *and burning instead of beauty*, Esay 3. 24.

9. It were well the daughters of our *Zion* would Copy out this Lecture, and prudently forsee how every particular sin or vanity of theirs will have its adapted punishment in another World. And

sure

ſure this conſideration well digeſted, muſt needs be a forcible expedient to cleanſe them from all *filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, as the Ap. ſpeaks 2 Cor. 7. 1. For is it poſſible for her to cheriſh and blow up her libidinous flames here, who conſiders them but as the firſt kindlings of thoſe inextinguiſhable ones hereafter? Can ſhe make it her ſtudy to pleaſe her appetite, that remembers that Dives's unintermitted feaſt ends in as unallaied a thirſt? Or can ſhe deny the crumbs of her table to that *Lazarus*, to whom ſhe forſees ſhe ſhall then ſupplicate for a drop of water? In fine can ſhe lay out her whole induſtry, her fortune, nay her ingenuity too, in making proviſion for the fleſh, who conſiders that that fleſh will more corrupt by pampering, and breed the worm that never dies? Certainly no woman can be ſo deſperately daring, as thus to attaque damnation, reſiſt her reaſon and her ſenſe, only that ſhe may ruin her ſoul; and unleſs ſhe can do all this, her foreſight will prove her eſcape, and her viewing the bottomleſs pit in Landskip and picture will ſecure her from a real deſcent into it.

10. But now that this Tract may not make its exit in the ſhape of a fury, bring the meditations to hell and there leave them, it muſt now at laſt ſhift the Scene, and as it has ſhew'd the blackneſs of vice by that outer darkneſs to which it leads, we alſo will let in a beam of the Celeſtial light to diſcover the beauty of Vertue; remind the Reader that there is a region of joy as well as a

place of torment, and piety and vertue is that milky way that leads to it; a ſtate, compar'd to which the Elyzium of the heathen is as inconſiderable as it is fictitious, the Mahometan Paradiſe as flat and inſipid as it is groſs and brutiſh; where the undertaking of the Pſalmiſt ſhall be compleatly anſwer'd, thoſe *that fear the Lord ſhall want no manner of thing that is good*, Pſalm. 34. 10. And this happy ſtate is as acceſſible as excellent. God is not unſincere in his propoſals, offers not theſe glories only to Tantalize and abuſe us, but to animate and incourage mankind. He ſets up an inviting prize, and he not only marks out, but levels the way to it; makes that our duty which is alſo our pleſure, yea and our honor too. So has he contriv'd for our eaſe, that knowing how hardly we can diveſt our voluptuouſneſs and ambition, he puts us not to it; all he demands is but that he may chooſe the objects, and in that he is yet more obliging, for by that at once he refines and ſatisfies the deſires. He takes us off indeed from the fulſom pleaſures of ſenſe, which by their groſſneſs may cloy, yet by reaſon of their emtineſs can never fill us; and brings us to taſt the more pure ſpiritual delights which are the true elixir of Pleſures, in compariſon whereof all the ſenſual are but as the dregs or feces in an extraction, after the ſpirits are drawn off. In like manner he calls us from our aſpiring to thoſe pinnacles of Honor, where we alwaies ſit totteringly and often fall down, but yet invites us

to

to ſoar higher, where we ſhall have the *moon* with all her viciſſitudes and changes *under our feet* Rev. 12. 1. and enjoy a grandeur as irreverſible as ſplendid.

11. Thus does he ſhew us a way to hallow our moſt unſanctified affections; thus, according to the Propheſie of *Zechariah*, *may holineſs be writ even upon the Bells of the Horſes*, *Zec.* 14. 20. upon our moſt brutal inclinations; and thus may all thoſe feminine Paſſions which now ſeduce women from Vertu, advance them in it. Let her that is amorous, place her love upon him who is (as the Spouſe tells us, *Cant.* 5. 10.) *the chiefeſt among ten thouſand*; ſhe that is angry, turn her edg againſt her ſins; ſhe that is haughty diſdain the Devils drudgery; ſhe that is fearful, dread him who *can deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, *Mat.* 5. 28. and ſhe that is ſad, reſerve her tears for her penitential offices. Thus may they conſecrate even their infirmities; and tho they cannot Deifie, or erect Temples to them, as the Romans did to their Paſſions, nay their Diſeaſes; yet after they are thus cleanſed, they may ſacrifice them as the Jews did the clean Beaſts in the Tabernacle. Only irreligion and profaneneſs is exempt from this Priviledg, no water of Purification can cleanſe it, or make it ſerviceable in the Temple; that, like the ſpoils of *Jericho*, is ſo execrable, that it muſt be devoted to deſtruction, as *an accurſed thing*, Joſ. 6. 17. For tho God do not deſpiſe the work of his own hands, have ſo much kindneſs to his

his Creatures, that he endeavours to reduce all our native inclinations to their primitive rectitude, and therefore does not aboliſh, but purifie them; yet Atheiſm is none of thoſe, 'tis a counterblaſt from hell, in oppoſition to that mighty wind in which the holy ſpirit deſcended. Tho the ſubject in which it ſubſiſts may be reform'd, the perſon may turn Chriſtian, and the wit that maintain'd its blaſphemous paradoxes may be converted to holier uſes: yet the quality it ſelf is capable of no ſuch happy Metamorphoſis; that muſt be extirpated, for it cannot be made tributary; which ſhews how tranſcendent an ill that is which cannot be converted to good, even that Omnipotence which can out of the very ſtones raiſe children to *Abraham*, attemts not any tranſmutation of this; which ought therefore to poſſeſs all hearts with a deteſtation of it, and to advance them in an earneſt purſuit of all the parts of Piety.

12. And that is it which I would now once more (as a farwel exhortation) commend to my female Readers, as that which vertually contains all other accompliſhment; 'tis that pearl in the Goſpel for which they may part with all and make a good bargain too. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdome* ſaies the wiſeſt of men *Prov.* 1. 7. and by his experience he ſhews that it is the compleating end of it too; for he no ſooner declin'd from that, but he grew to dotage and diſhonor. Let all thoſe therefore to whom God has diſpenſt an outward affluence, given them

them a viſible ſplendor in the eies of the World, be careful to ſecure to themſelves *that honor which comes from God only*, Joh. 5. 44. unite their ſouls to that Supreme Majeſty who is the fountain of true honor: who in his beſtowing the Crown of righteouſneſs proceeds by the ſame meaſures by which he diſpoſed the Crown of *Iſrael*, when he avow'd to *Samuel* that he *lookt not on the outward appearance, but beheld the heart*, Sam. 16. 7. If God ſee not his own Image there, all the beauty and gaiety of the outward form is deſpicable in his eies, like the apples of *Sodom* only a Kind of painted duſt. But if Piety be firmly rooted there, they then become like the Kings daughter all *glorious within* too; a much more valuable bravery then the *garment of needle work and veſture of Gold*, Pſalm 45. 14. And this is it that muſt enter them into the Kings *Palace*, into that *new Jeruſalem*; where they ſhall not wear, but inhabit *Pearls and Gems*, Rev. 21. 19. be beautiful without the help of art or nature, by the meer reflexion of the divine brightneſs; be all that their then enlarg'd comprehenſions can wiſh, and infinitely more then they can here imagine.

FINIS.

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